Shojo Beat Manga

BABY & Me

15

Story & Art by

Marimo Ragawa

Shojo Beat

BABY & Me

Vol. 15

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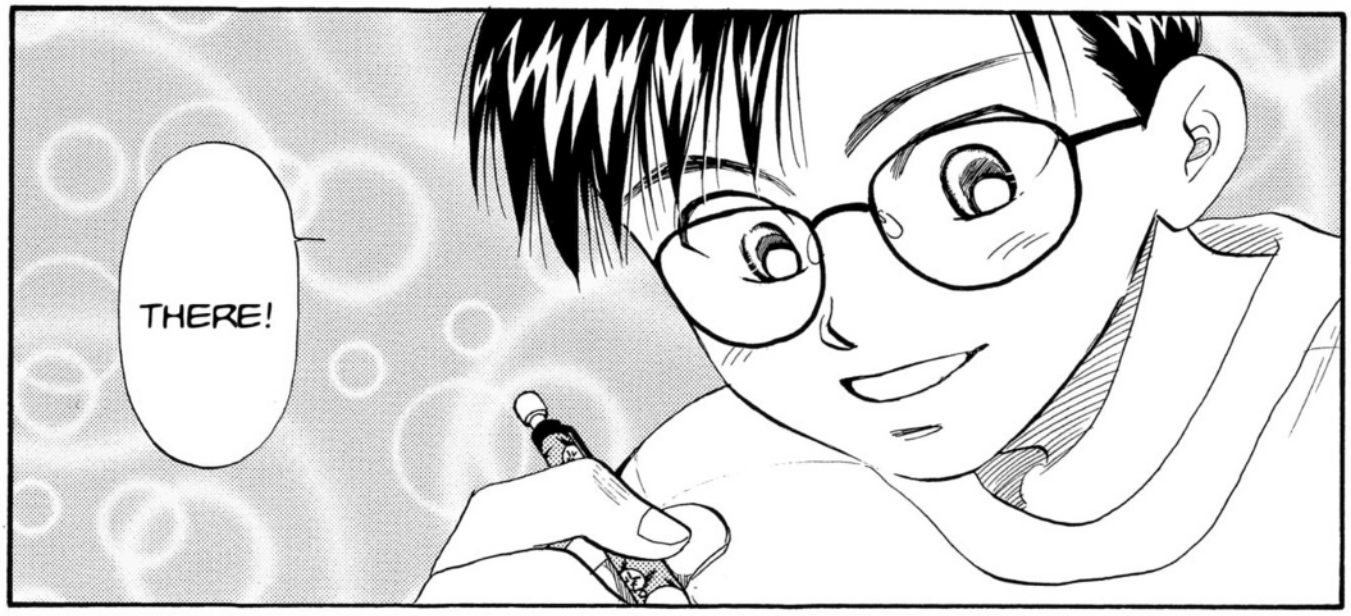
BABY & ME

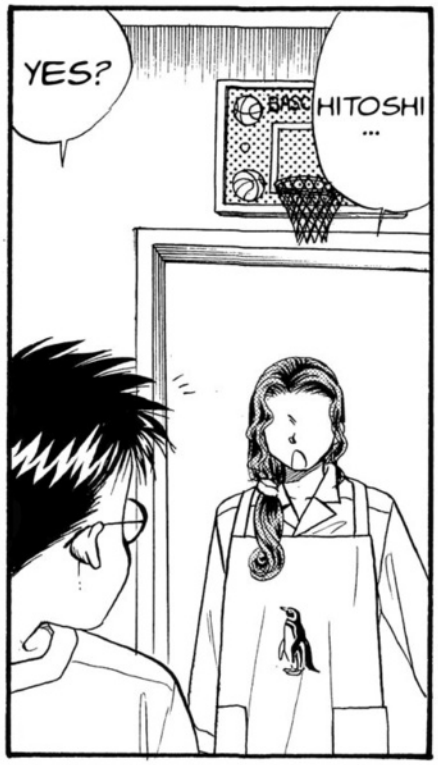
Table of Contents

Chapter 81	3
Chapter 82	34
Chapter 83	67
Chapter 84	97
Chapter 85	127
Bonus Story: Irradiation of Summer and You	157

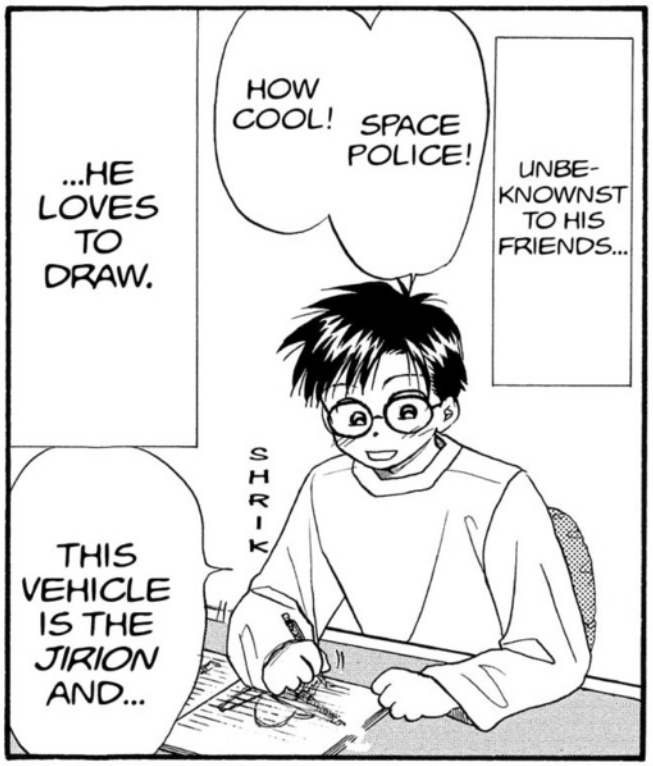
BABY & Me
Chapter 81


THERE!

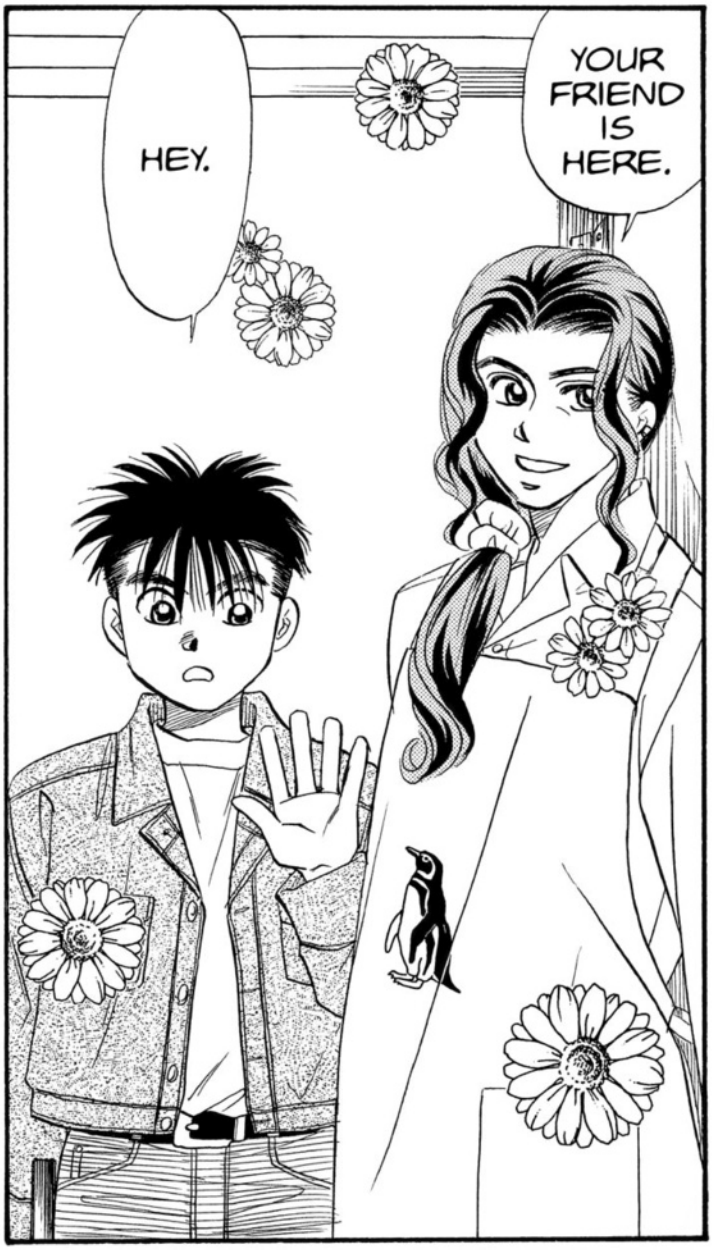
HITOSHI MORIGUCHI, AGE 12, PRESIDENT OF THE KONAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL.
Pentel
SOFT
TIC ERASER
FINISHED!

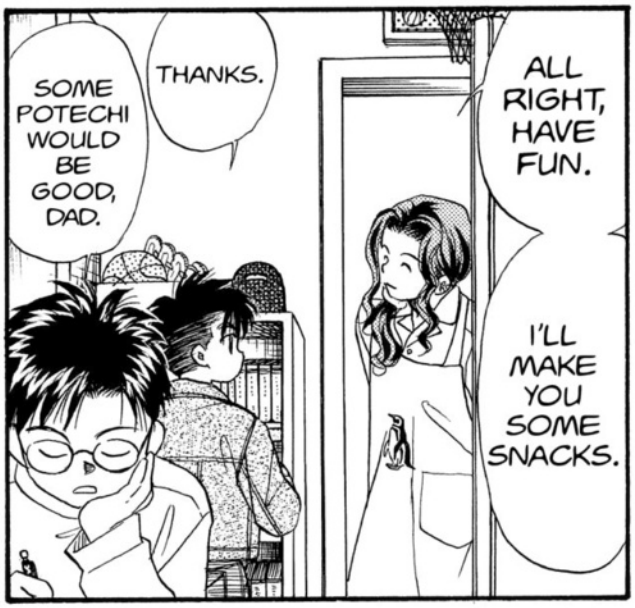

YES?
HITOSHI ...

NOK
NOK

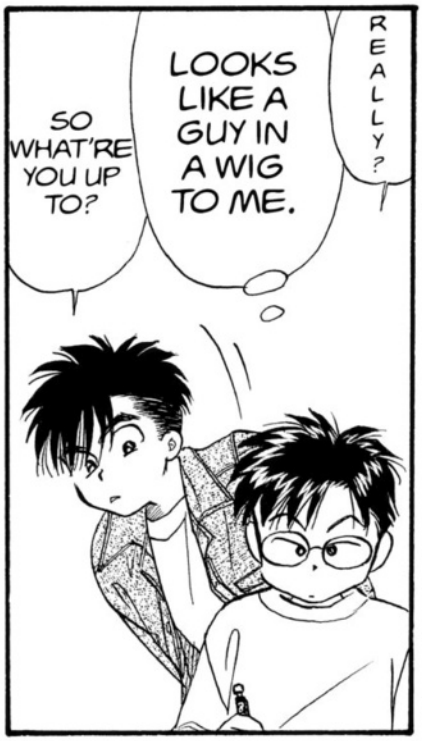

...HE LOVES TO DRAW.
HOW COOL!
SPACE POLICE!
UNBE-KNOWNST TO HIS FRIENDS...
SHRIK
THIS VEHICLE IS THE JIRION AND...

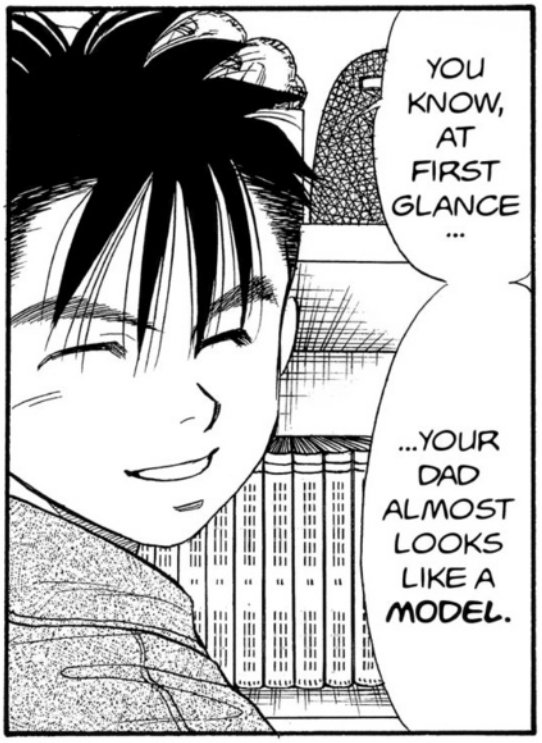
HI, AKIHIRO!
CAN I BORROW THE NEXT VOLUME OF THIS?
SURE. IT'S ON THE BOOK-SHELF.


YOUR FRIEND IS HERE.
HEY.


ALL RIGHT, HAVE FUN.
THANKS.
SOME POTECHI WOULD BE GOOD, DAD.
I'LL MAKE YOU SOME SNACKS.

HEH HEH HEH ...
WANNA SEE SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WORKING ON?
WHUP
HUH?

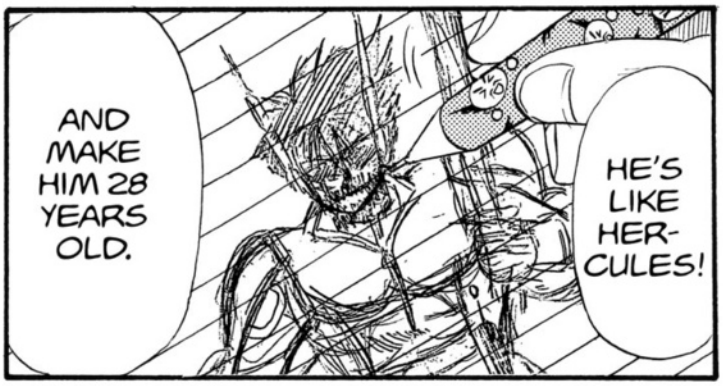

REALLLY?
LOOKS LIKE A GUY IN A WIG TO ME.
SO WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?


YOU KNOW, AT FIRST GLANCE ...
...YOUR DAD ALMOST LOOKS LIKE A MODEL.

HE'S 14 YEARS OLD...
...AND HIS VEHICLE IS CALLED THE JIRION.
HE'S WITH THE SPACE POLICE. HIS NAME IS MAX B3.
HUH?
CHECK IT OUT.
CANPUS
...IF HE'S ONLY 14?
HOW CAN HE BE A POLICE OFFICER ...
YUP!
DID YOU DRAW THIS?
POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS?
HE'S POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS TOO!
MAX B3 IS SUPER-INTELLI-GENT.
IT'S OKAY. THIS STORY TAKES PLACE IN THE FUTURE!
WH-WHAT'S WRONG?
AND DOES HE HAVE A LICENSE TO FLY THAT THING?
HE'D JUST BE START-ING HIGH SCHOOL.
WHAT ?

HE NEEDS BIGGER MUSCLES. AND A BEARD.
HEY!
THERE. THAT'S BETTER.
SHRIK
SHRIK

THEN HE NEEDS TO BE BETTER LOOKING.
AND HE'S TOO THIN.
HE IS?

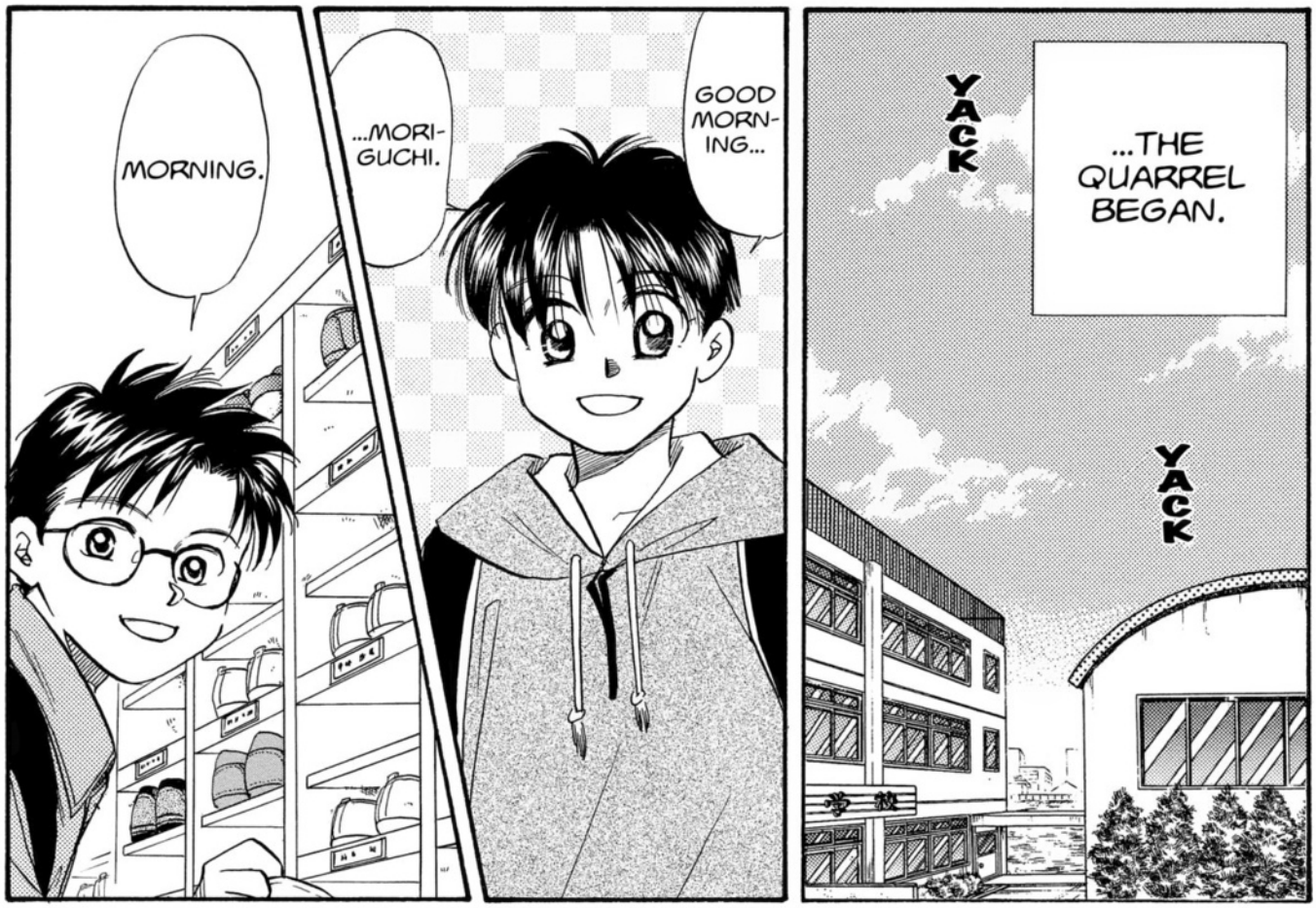

AND MAKE HIM 28 YEARS OLD.
HE'S LIKE HER-CULES!

NOW HIS LOOKS MATCH THAT FOREIGN NAME YOU GAVE HIM!
HOW'S THAT?
THROB THROB

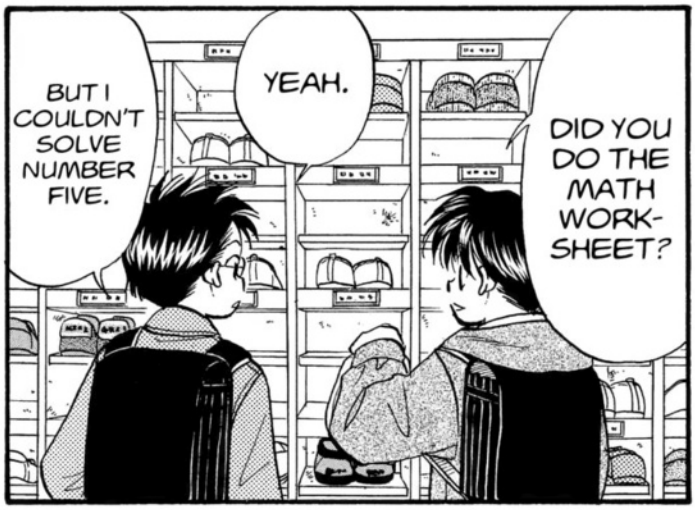
YOU JERK!! GET OUT OF HERE!!

THAT'S HOW...

WHAT?
A-AKI-AKIHIRO ...
GRR
GRR


MORNING.
...MORI-GUCHI.
GOOD MORN-ING...
YACK
...THE QUARREL BEGAN.
YACK
学校

!
OKAY.
I COULDN'T DO NUMBER SEVEN.
WANNA HELP EACH OTHER?


BUT I COULDN'T SOLVE NUMBER FIVE.
YEAH.
DID YOU DO THE MATH WORK-SHEET?

WAIT! I'LL GO WITH YOU!
HUH?
...
I'LL MEET YOU IN THE CLASSROOM, TAKUYA!
TMP
TMP
TMP

Author's Note: Part 1

Hi, everybody. Marimo Ragawa here. In this volume, two of my assistants, my sister and Devil F, will be helping me with my Author's Notes. I'm having a hard time coming up with things to write about. I really appreciate their help!

The History of Hayami Kasuga's Hairstyles

Hayami in Volume 14

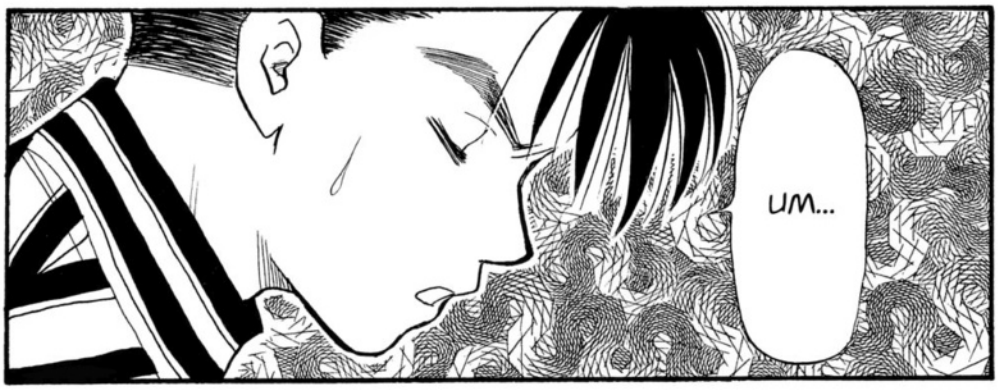
Before

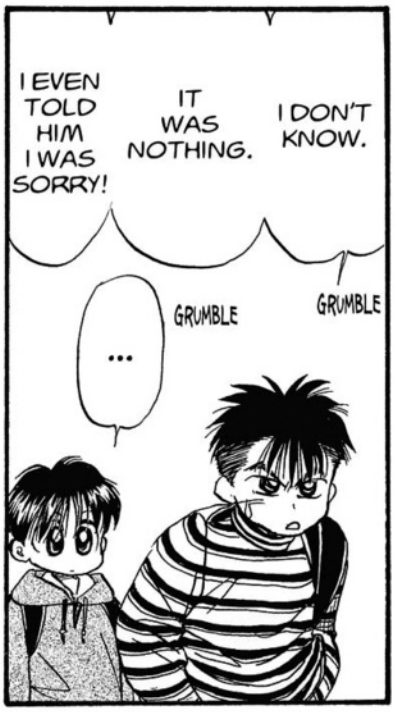
↓

Hayami in Volume 15

After

A French doll? 66





AT THAT MO-MENT...

AREN'T THEY GONNA MAKE UP?

...HITOSHI SEEMED LIKE A STUBBORN GIRLFRIEND WHO WOULD NEVER FORGIVE HIM, NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE APOLOGIZED.

...TO AKIHI-RO...

I AM...

...THE SCORPION WOMAN!

NO!! NEVER!

(WOMAN)

FORGIVE ME!

BOW

BOW

(MAN)

SCARY.

GRADE 6 CLASS 2
LIKE I SAID...
...WHAT I DID WAS WRONG.
BUT...
...YOU SHOULDN'T STAY MAD AT ME. CAN'T YOU FORGET IT?
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO...
...TO GET YOU TO FORGIVE ME?
I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.
YEAH?
AKIHI-RO...
WHAT IS IT?
HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO BE SO ARROGANT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE APOLOGIZING?
WH-
WHAT?
DON'T YOU HAVE A SHRED OF HUMILITY?

YOU CAN'T START COMPLAINING NOW!
YOU KNOW HOW I AM!
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

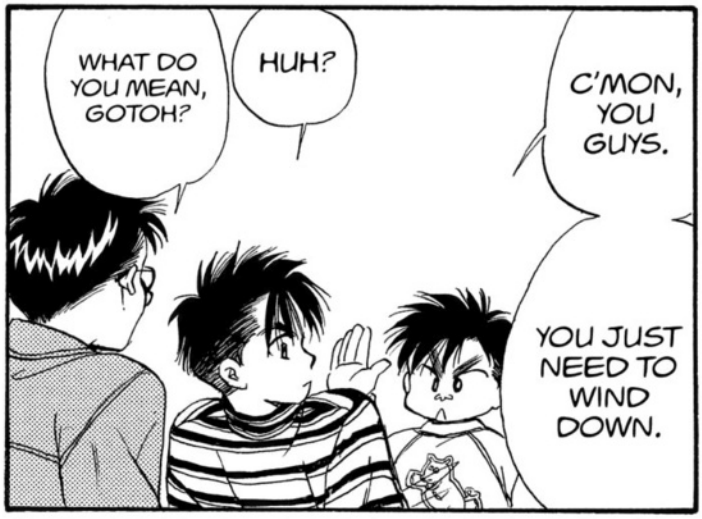
WHAT?
HITOSHI, LISTEN!
WHUP

I DON'T SEE ANY SIGN OF REMORSE!!
HUMILITY?

SILENCE

AT THAT MOMENT ...

IT'S OVER!! GET OVER IT!!
HMPH
...AKIHIRO SEEMED LIKE A STUBBORN BOYFRIEND WHO'D BEEN CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING WRONG.
...TO HITOSHI...
WHY WOULD YOU DO SUCH A THING?
WHAT A JERK!!
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT FOR GETTING MIXED UP WITH A GUY LIKE ME!
MAN
SHUT UP! THIS IS HOW I AM!
WOMAN


WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GOTOH?
HUH?
C'MON, YOU GUYS.
YOU JUST NEED TO WIND DOWN.

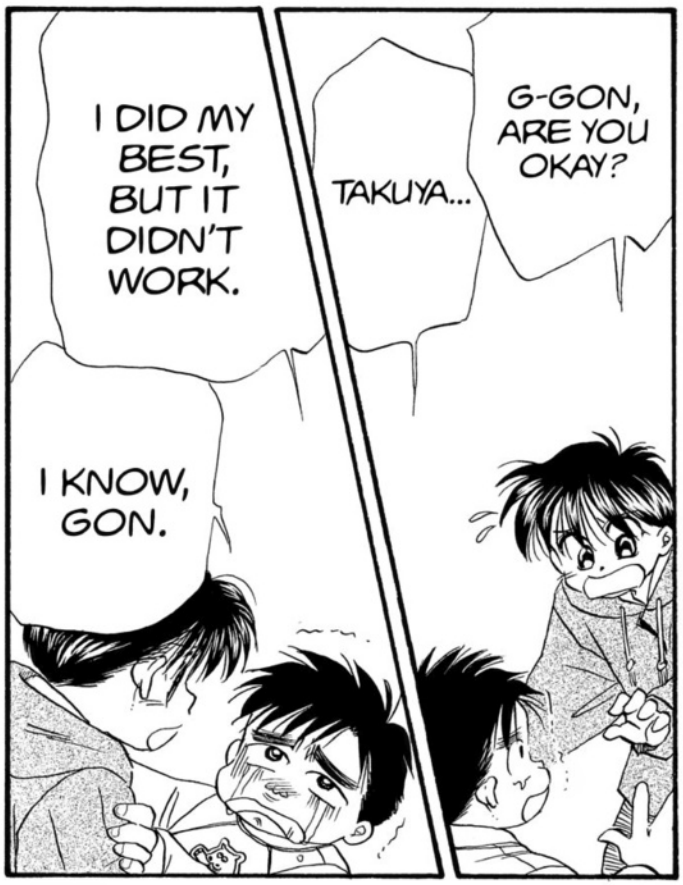
WHUp
I CAN'T WATCH THIS.
I'D BETTER HELP THEM OUT.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, GON?

...
...NEW...
THE ...
SWUp
WHUp

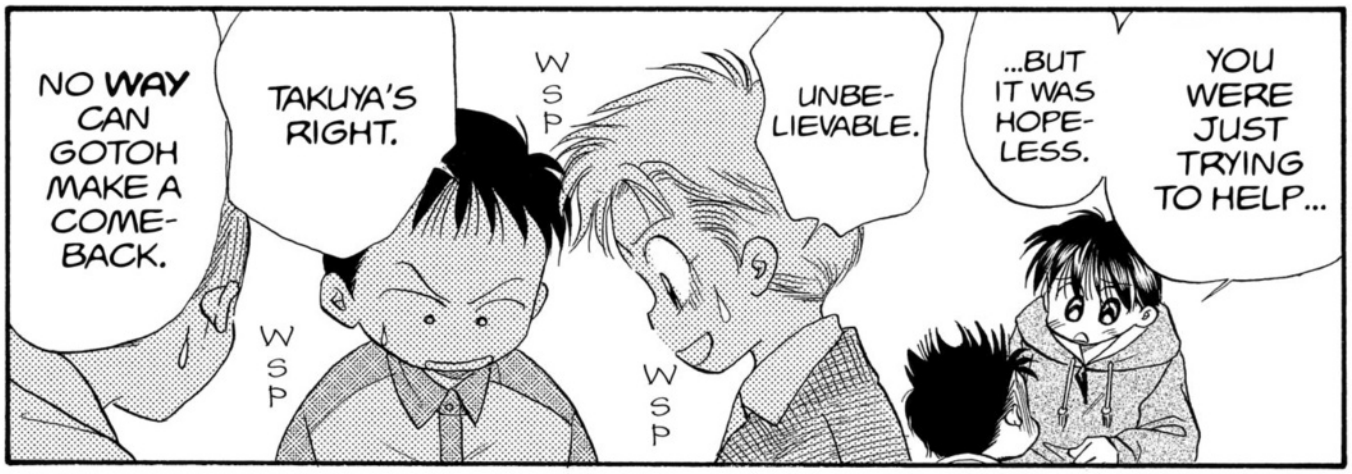
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT, OKAY?
LET'S RELAX OUR MINDS.
DON'T SAY THINGS YOU'LL REGRET LATER.
HUH?

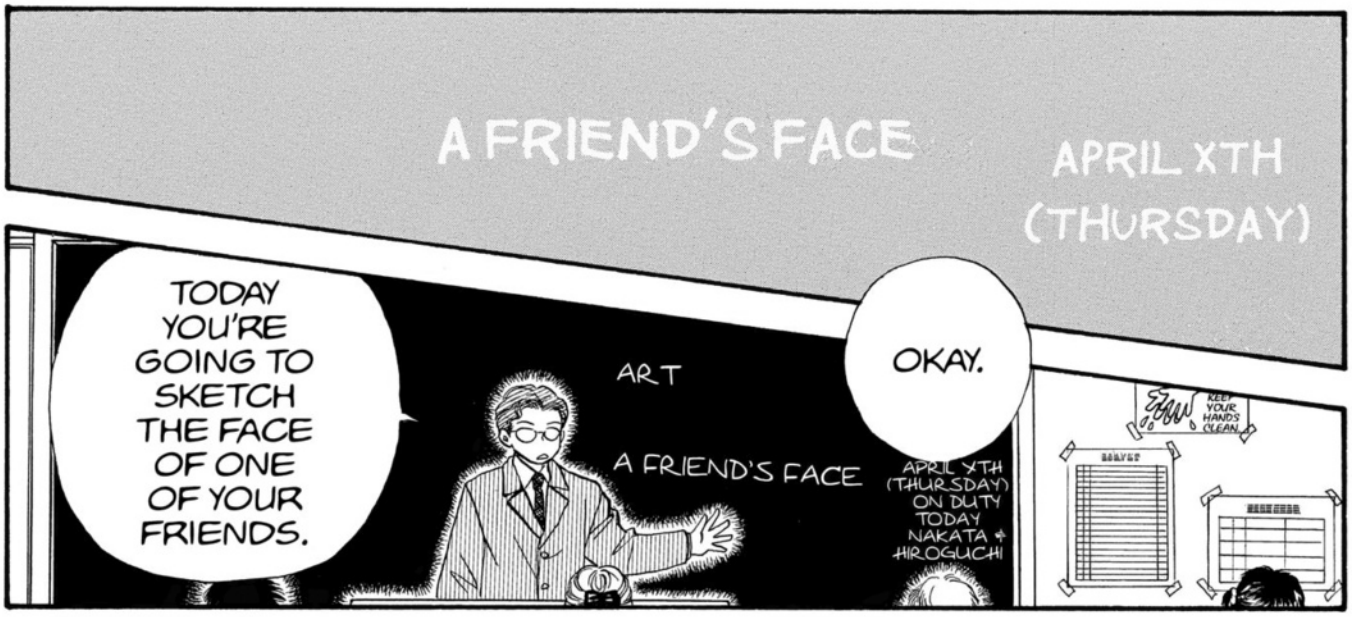
NOW DO IT WITH ME!
HA HA!!
W...
HIPP

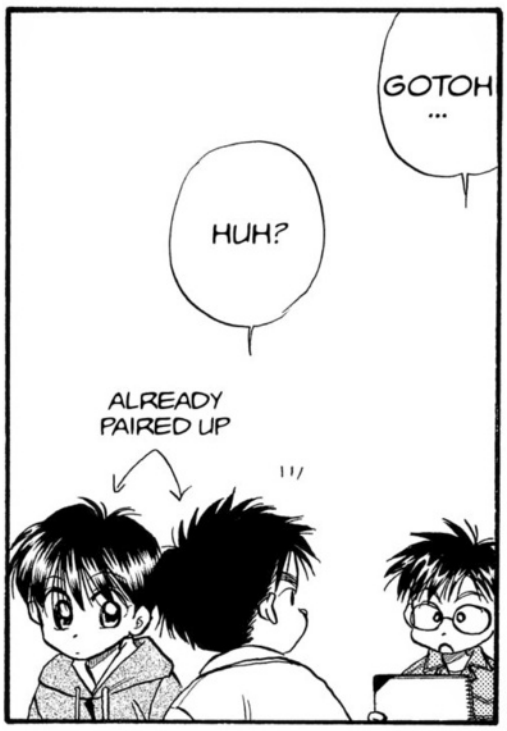
HA!!
CHO!! THE PRO-GRAM LIST...
...IS SO DE-TAILED !!
SWUp
SWUp
THWUMp
HIPPO
...TV GUIDE !!

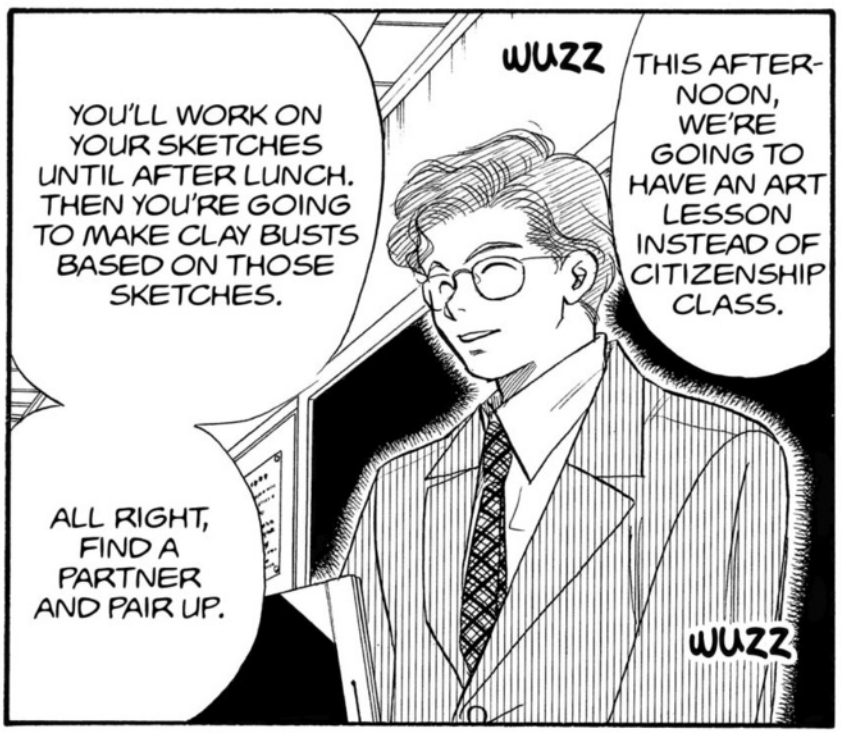

I DID MY BEST, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK.
TAKUYA...
G-GON, ARE YOU OKAY?
I KNOW, GON.

WHAT DOES THAT DANCE HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?
WE CAN'T DO THAT !!
THUMP

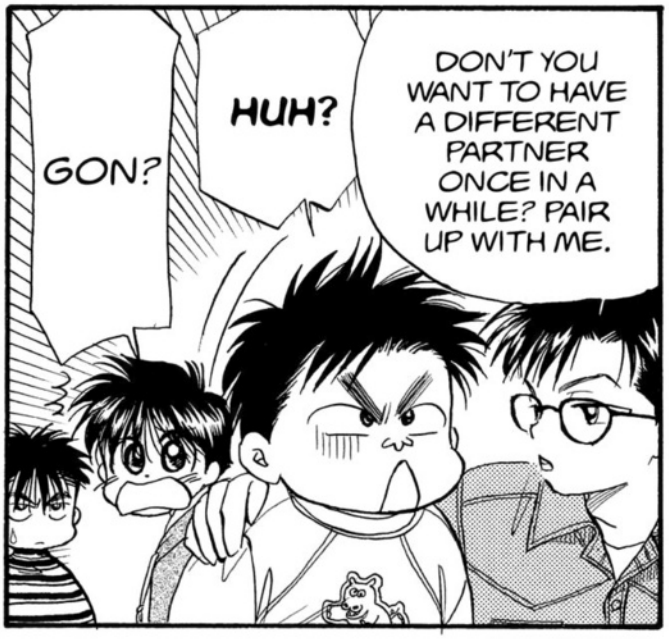

NO WAY CAN GOTOH MAKE A COME-BACK.
TAKUYA'S RIGHT.
WSP
WSP
WSP
UNBE-LIEVABLE.
...BUT IT WAS HOPE-LESS.
YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO HELP...

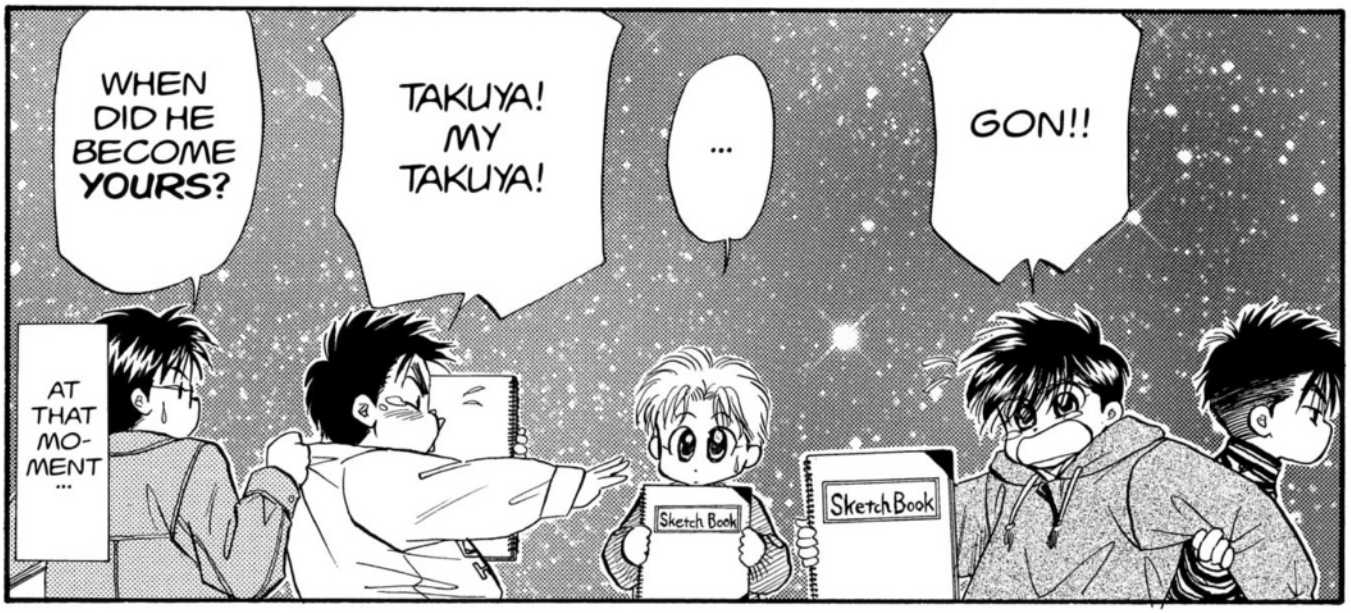

A FRIEND'S FACE
APRIL XTH (THURSDAY)
TODAY YOU'RE GOING TO SKETCH THE FACE OF ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS.
ART
A FRIEND'S FACE
APRIL XTH (THURSDAY) ON DUTY TODAY NAKATA + HIROGUCHI
OKAY.
KEEP YOUR HANDS CLEAN!

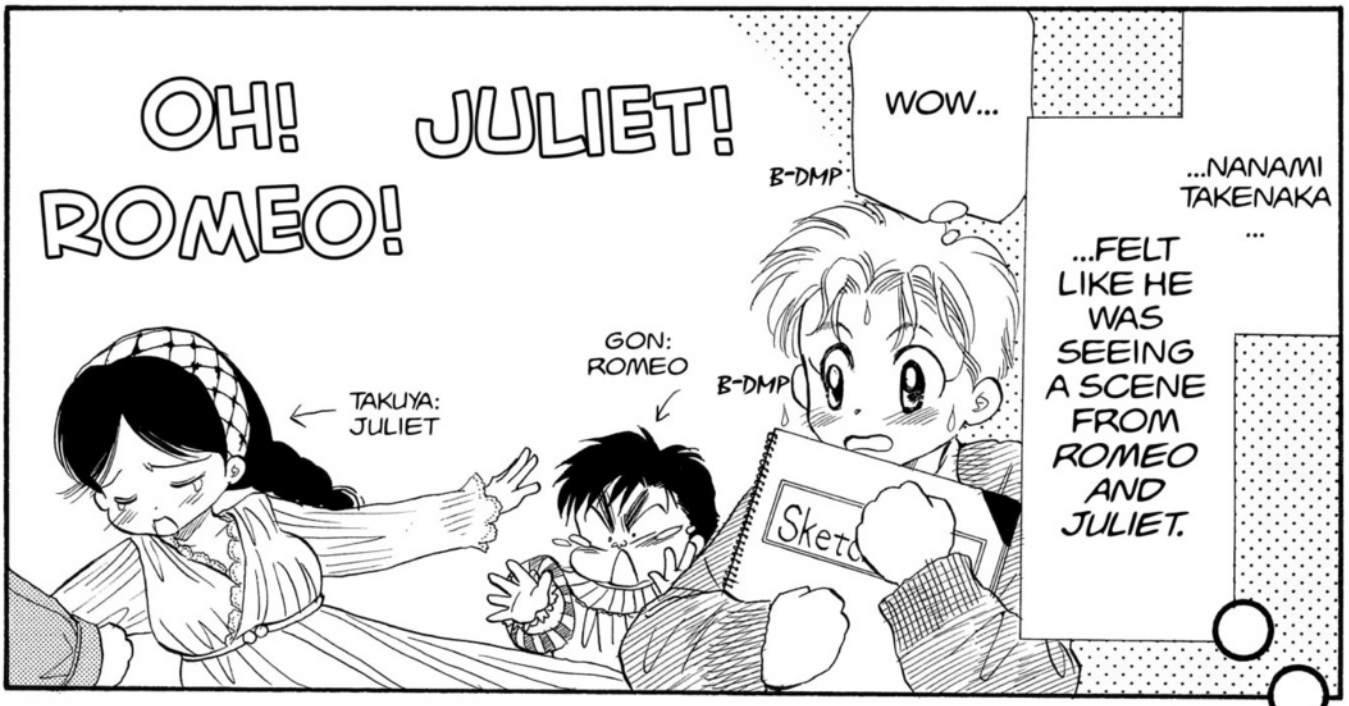

GOTOH ...
HUH?
ALREADY PAIRED UP

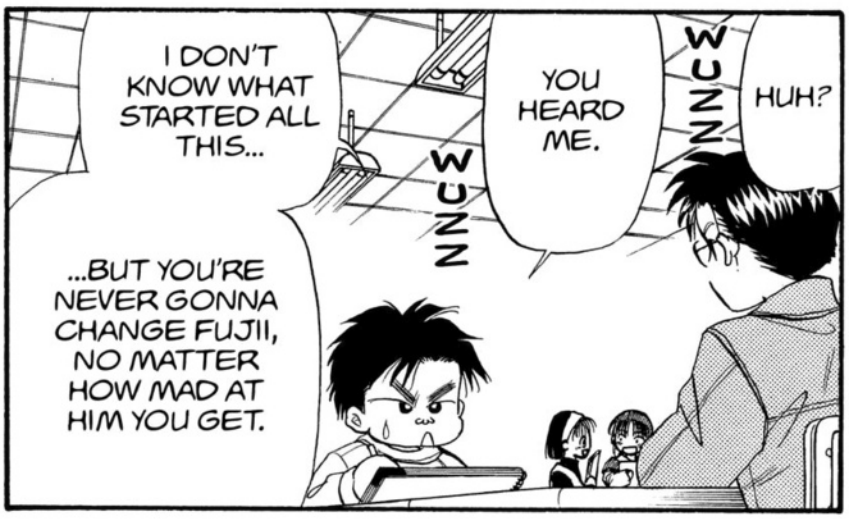

YOU'LL WORK ON YOUR SKETCHES UNTIL AFTER LUNCH. THEN YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE CLAY BUSTS BASED ON THOSE SKETCHES.
WUZZ
THIS AFTERNOON, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE AN ART LESSON INSTEAD OF CITIZENSHIP CLASS.
ALL RIGHT, FIND A PARTNER AND PAIR UP.
WUZZ

AH!! TAKUYA!!
HUH? FUJII?
...COME WITH ME, ENOKI.
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
TUG

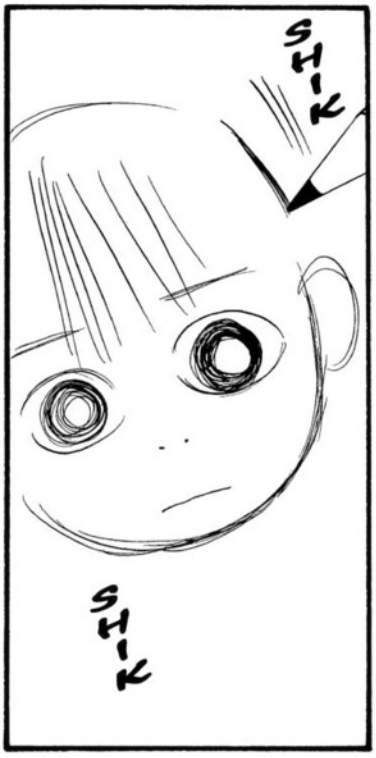

GON?
HUH?
DON'T YOU WANT TO HAVE A DIFFERENT PARTNER ONCE IN A WHILE? PAIR UP WITH ME.

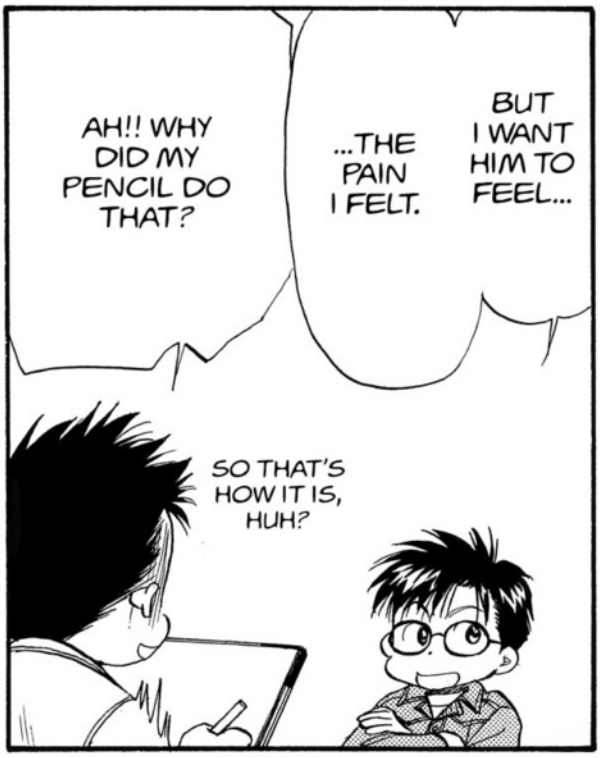

WHEN DID HE BECOME YOURS?
TAKUYA! MY TAKUYA!
...
GON!!
AT THAT MOMENT ...
Sketch Book
Sketch Book


OH! ROMEO!
JULIET!
WOW...
B-DMP
...NANAMI TAKENAKA ...
...FELT LIKE HE WAS SEEING A SCENE FROM ROMEO AND JULIET.
GON: ROMEO
B-DMP
TAKUYA: JULIET
Sketc


I DON'T KNOW WHAT STARTED ALL THIS...
...BUT YOU'RE NEVER GONNA CHANGE FUJII, NO MATTER HOW MAD AT HIM YOU GET.
WUNN
YOU HEARD ME.
WUNN
HUH?

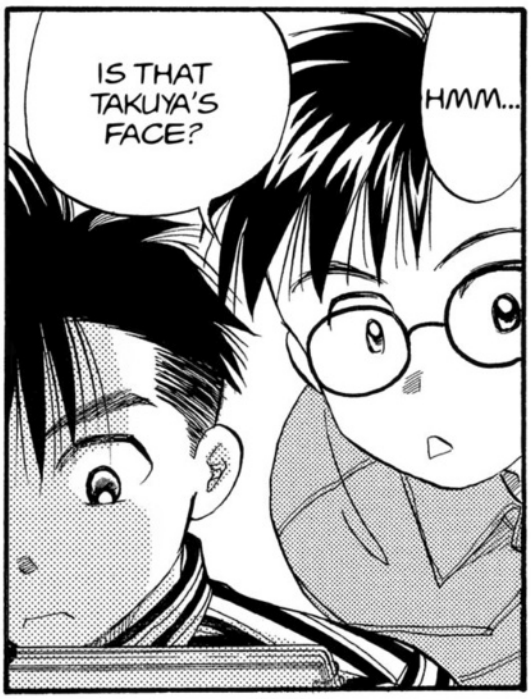
WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGIVE HIM?

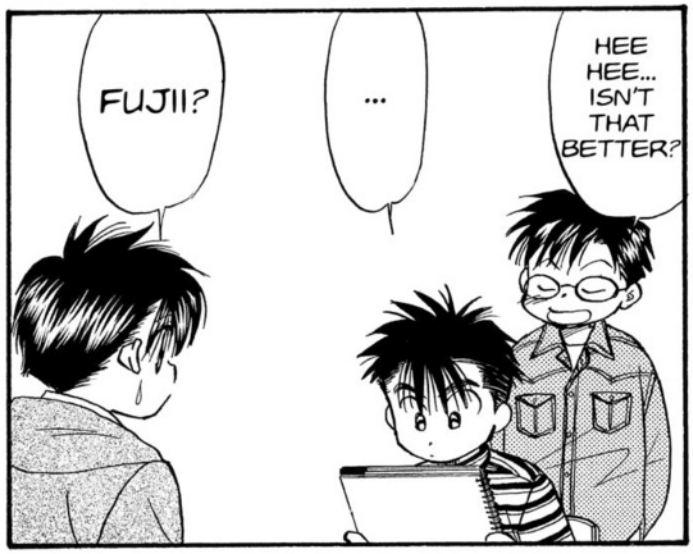

SHIK
SHIK

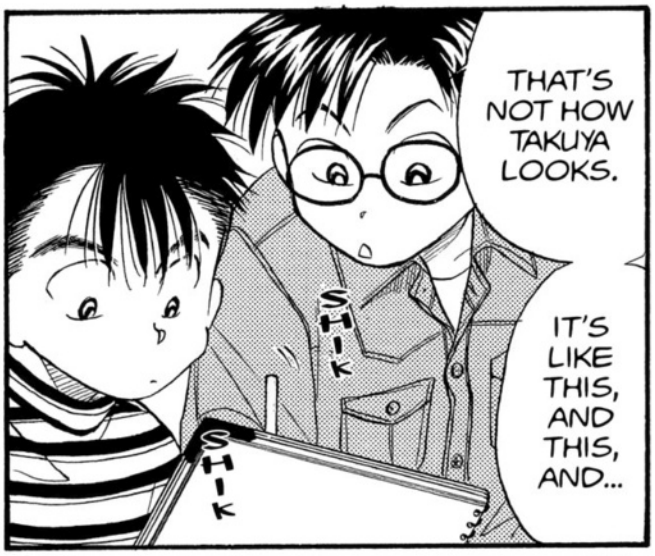

AH!! WHY DID MY PENCIL DO THAT?
...THE PAIN I FELT.
BUT I WANT HIM TO FEEL...
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, HUH?

WELL, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
HE WON'T CHANGE?
YOU KNOW I AM.

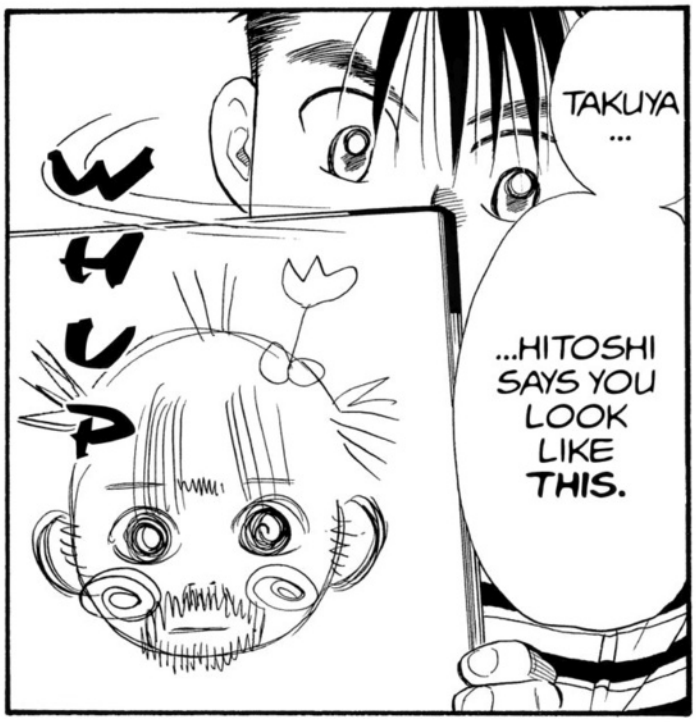
BUT I'LL GIVE YOU SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE.
I AM.
HITOSHI?
AREN'T YOU MAD AT ME?
...

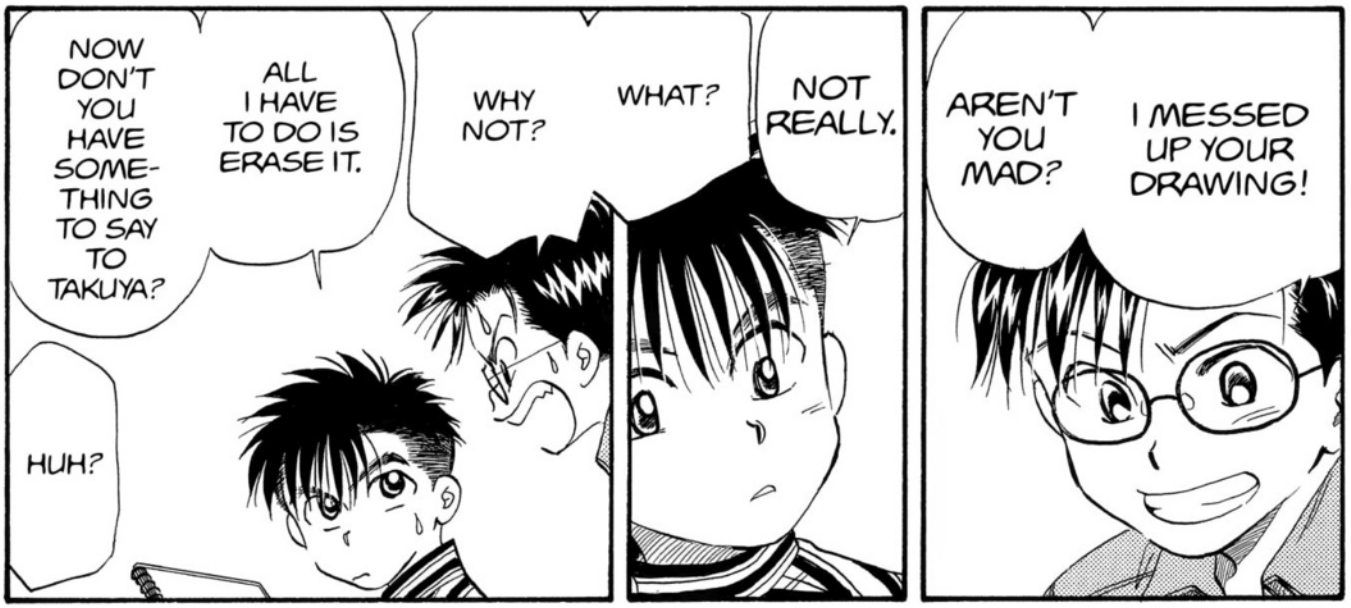

IS THAT TAKUYA'S FACE?
HMM...

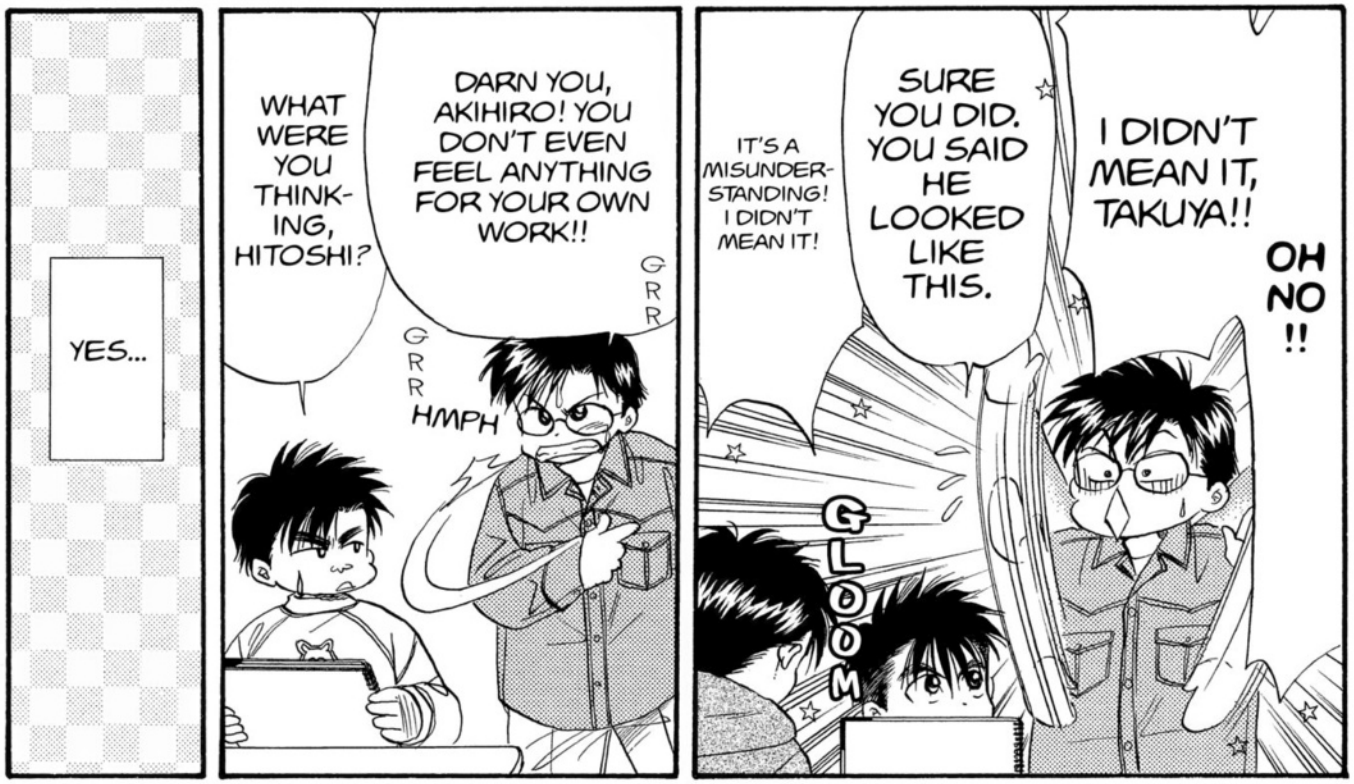

FUJII?
...
HEE HEE... ISN'T THAT BETTER?

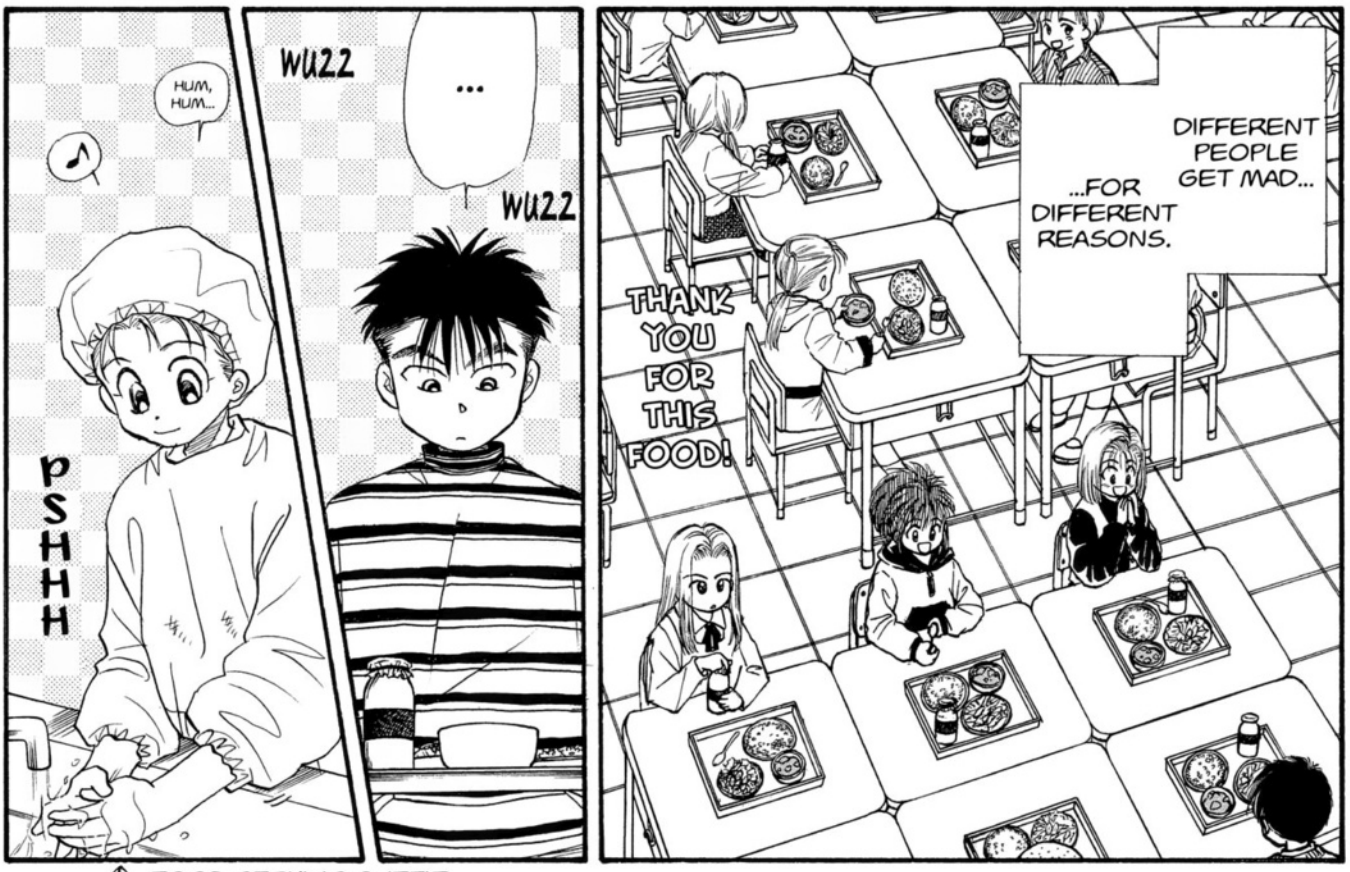

THAT'S NOT HOW TAKUYA LOOKS.
IT'S LIKE THIS, AND THIS, AND...
SHI-K
SHI-K

HUH?
HOW DOES IT FEEL, AKIHIRO?

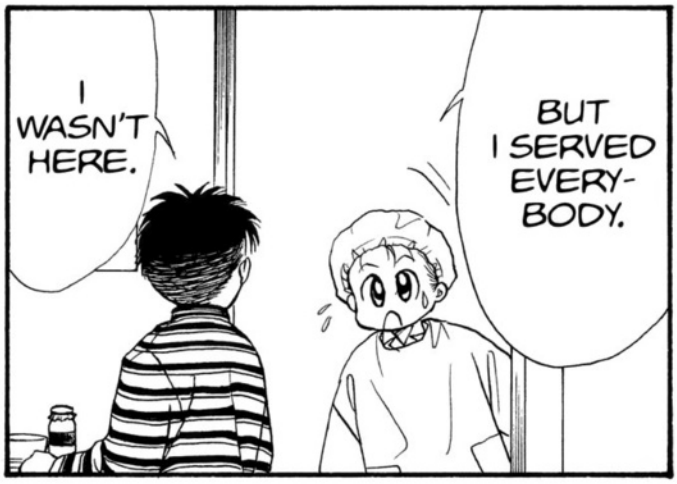

WHUP
TAKUYA ...
...HITOSHI SAYS YOU LOOK LIKE THIS.

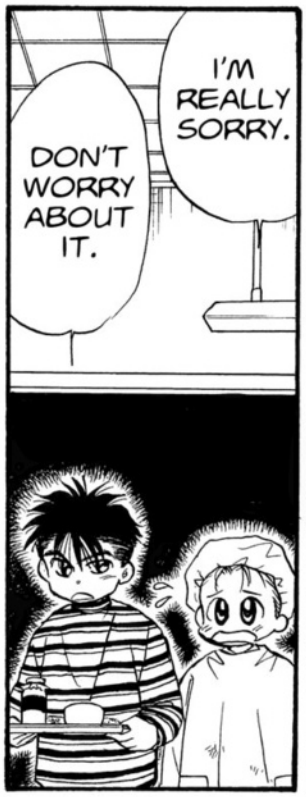

NOW DON'T YOU HAVE SOME-THING TO SAY TO TAKUYA?
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ERASE IT.
WHY NOT?
WHAT?
NOT REALLY.
AREN'T YOU MAD?
I MESSED UP YOUR DRAWING!
HUH?


YES...
WHAT WERE YOU THINK-ING, HITOSHI?
DARN YOU, AKIHIRO! YOU DON'T EVEN FEEL ANYTHING FOR YOUR OWN WORK!!
GRRR
GRRR
HMPH
IT'S A MISUNDER-STANDING! I DIDN'T MEAN IT!
SURE YOU DID. YOU SAID HE LOOKED LIKE THIS.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT, TAKUYA!!
OH NO !!
GLOOM



FOOD SERVING OUTFIT

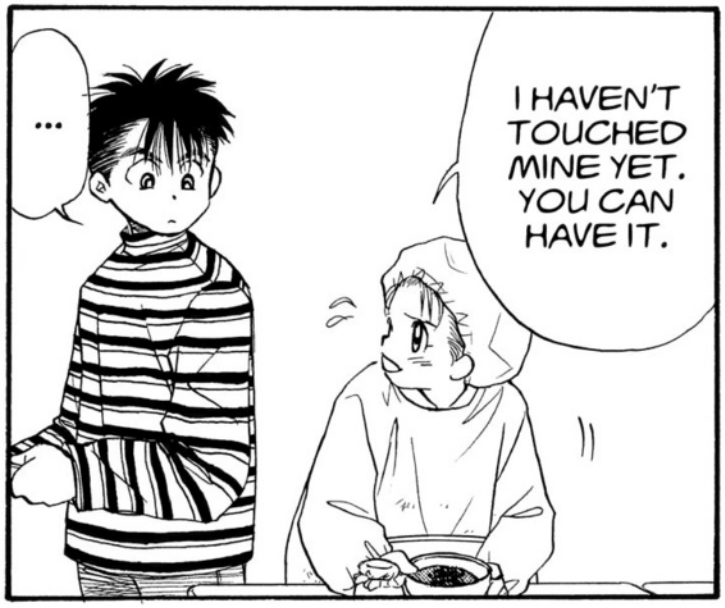


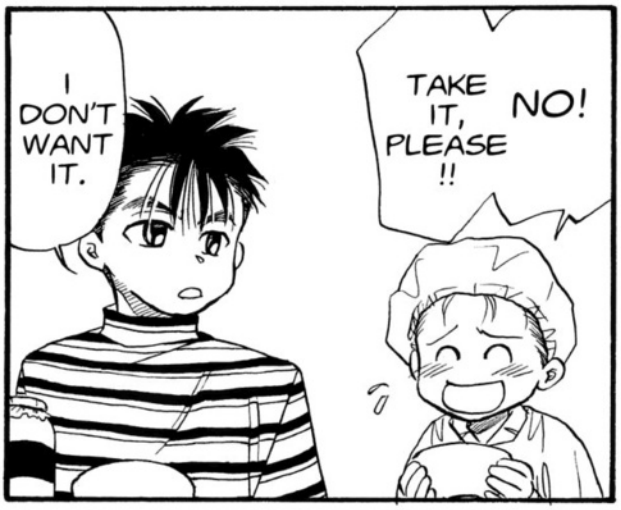

I'M REALLY SORRY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

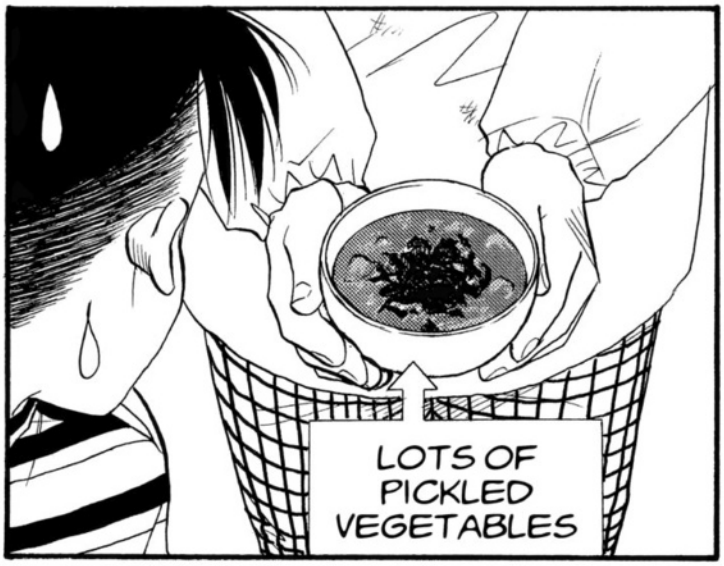
WHAT'S THE MAT-TER?
NOTHING.
CLASS CHORES

OH! I'M SORRY.
THE PERSON WHO SERVED THE SALAD LEFT A BOWL FOR ME.

DO YOU LIKE PICKLES?
I LOVE THEM. ♡
THEN **YOU** EAT IT.
DOESN'T LIKE PICKLES


I HAVEN'T TOUCHED MINE YET. YOU CAN HAVE IT.
...

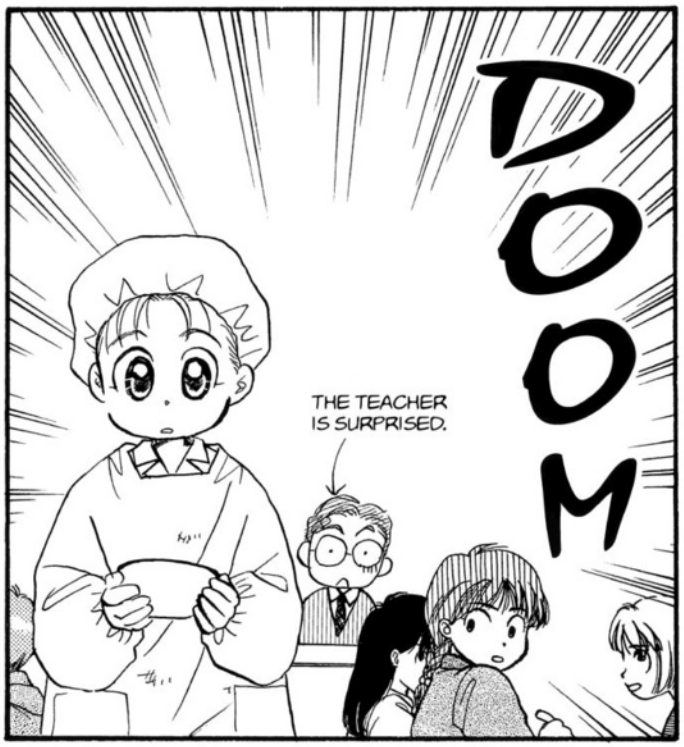

NO!
TAKE IT, PLEASE !!
I DON'T WANT IT.


LOTS OF PICKLED VEGETABLES

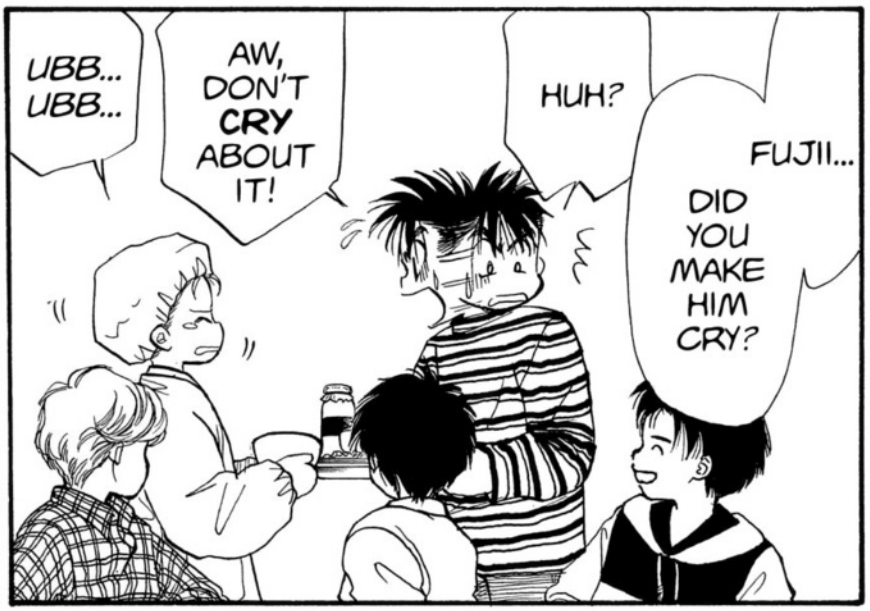
NOW STOP BUGGING ME!!
I SAID I DON'T WANT IT!!
BUT...

UH...
GULP

PLUP


DOOM
THE TEACHER IS SURPRISED.

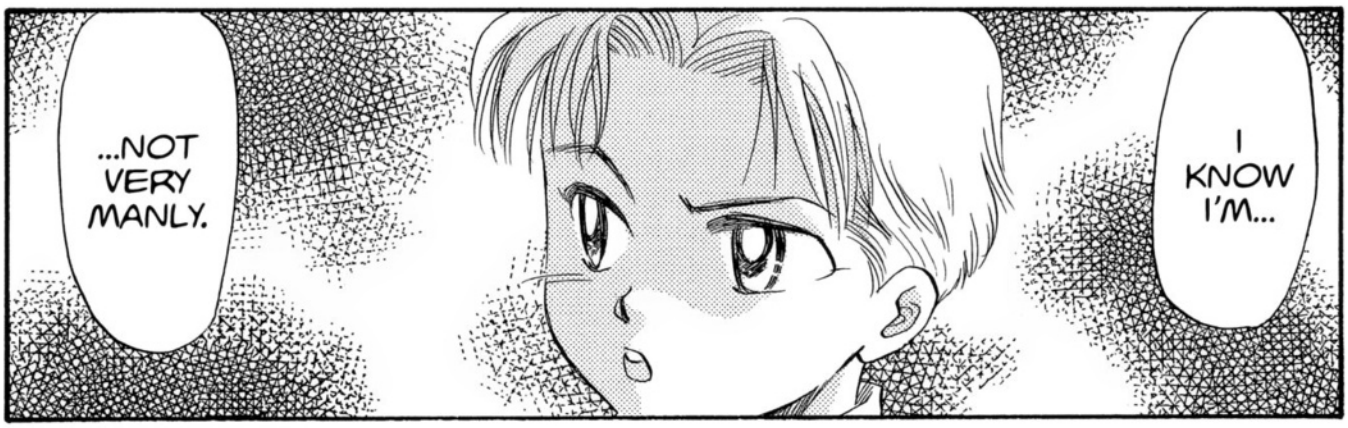
I DON'T THINK YEL-LING AT HIM IS GONNA WORK.
WHAT'S HE DOING?
STOP THAT!!

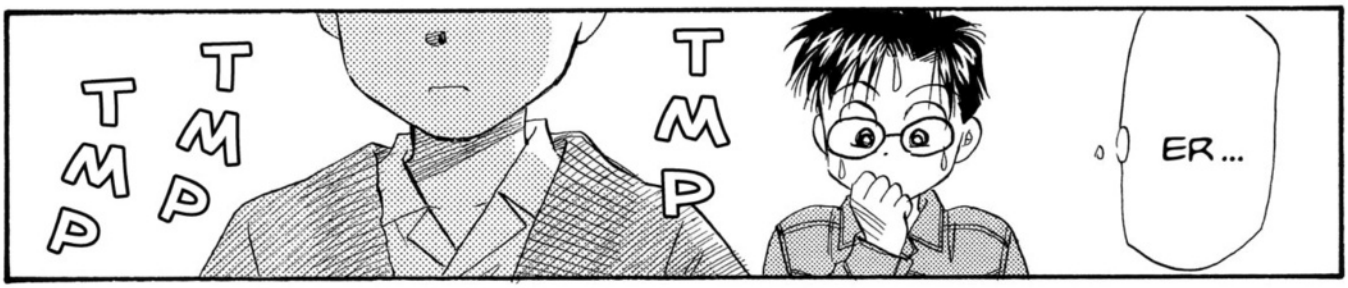

UBB... UBB...
AW, DON'T CRY ABOUT IT!
HUH?
FUJII...
DID YOU MAKE HIM CRY?

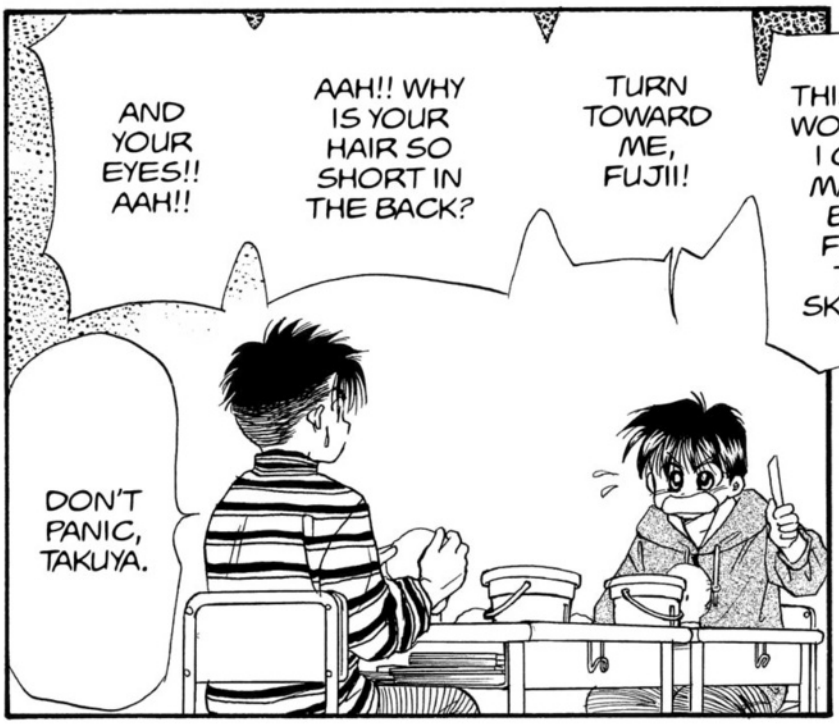
THAT AFTER-NOON...
SIGH ...
SPLASH
SPLASH
FUJII MUST STILL BE MAD.
UH, SORRY.
WAP
!
SPLASH
...
AH!
I'M ALL WET.
YUCK ...
TAKE-NAKA! I'M SORRY!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HAVING WATER PROB-LEMS TODAY.
DON'T WA WATER
HUH? WHY?
ﾊﾝｶｰﾁ
ﾎﾟﾘｰﾎﾟ

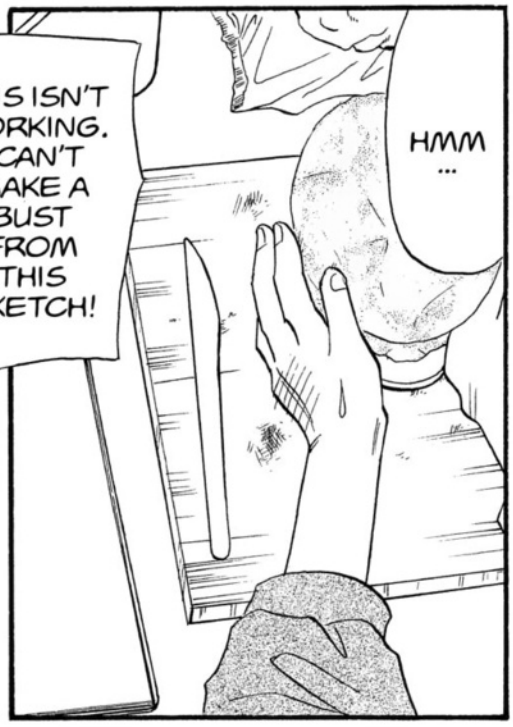
I'M SORRY.
HA HA...

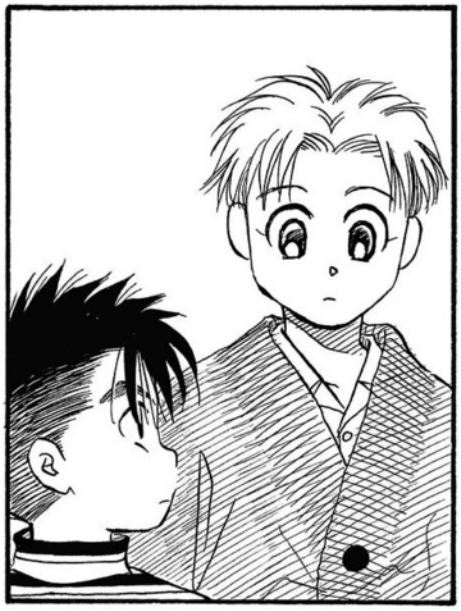
A WHILE AGO YOU CRIED, AND NOW YOU'RE SOAKING WET.
YOU'RE A MAN...
...SO TRY NOT TO CRY IN FRONT OF EVERY-BODY.
HA HA HA

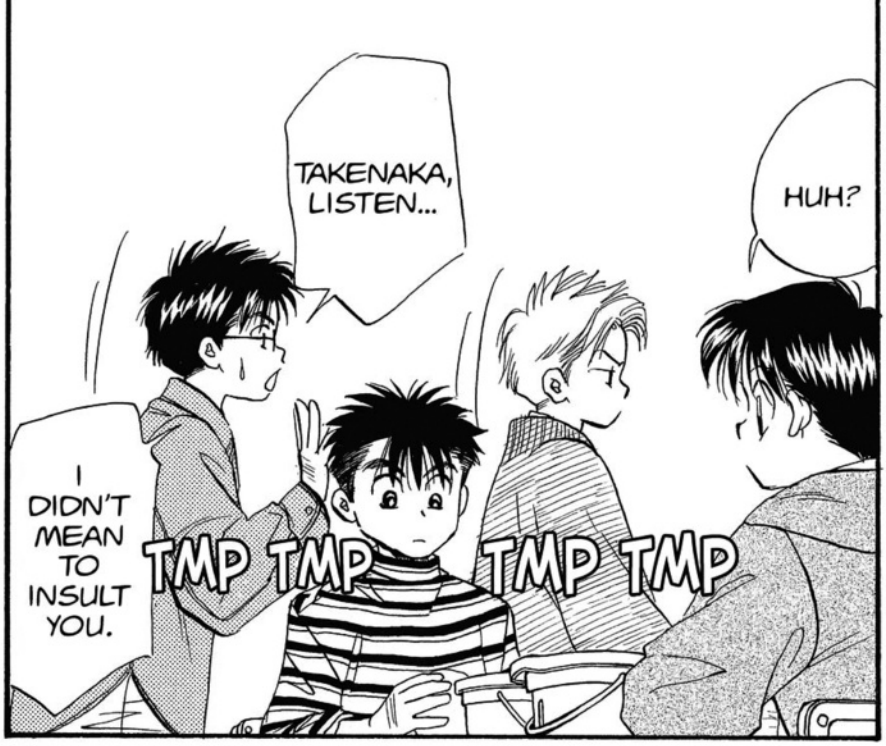

I KNOW I'M...
...NOT VERY MANLY.


ER...
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP


THIS ISN'T WORKING. I CAN'T MAKE A BUST FROM THIS SKETCH!
TURN TOWARD ME, FUJII!
AAH!! WHY IS YOUR HAIR SO SHORT IN THE BACK?
AND YOUR EYES!! AAH!!
DON'T PANIC, TAKUYA.


HMM ...



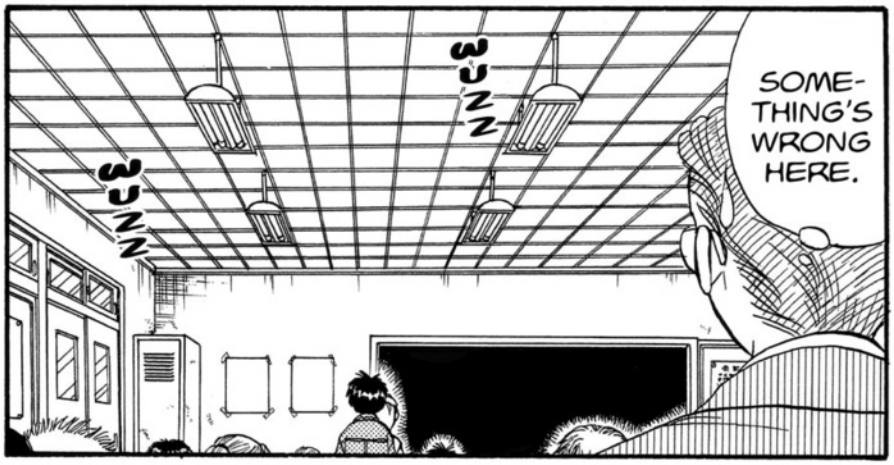

TAKENAKA, LISTEN...
HUH?
I DIDN'T MEAN TO INSULT YOU.
TMP TMP
TMP TMP

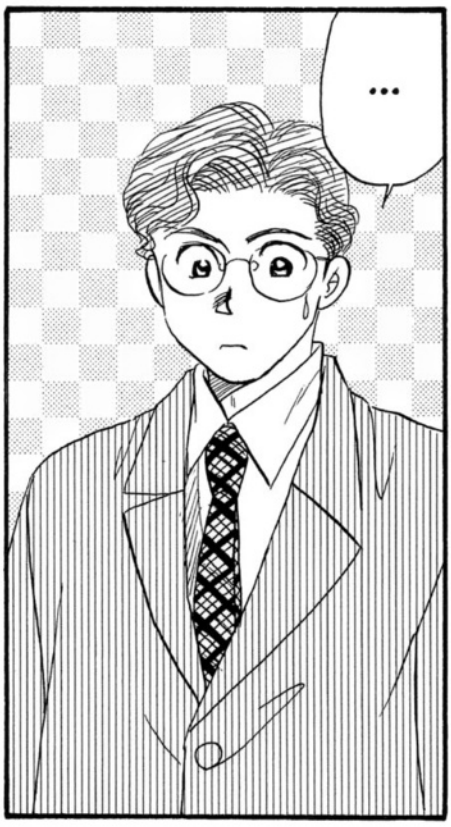
...
AT THAT MO-MENT...

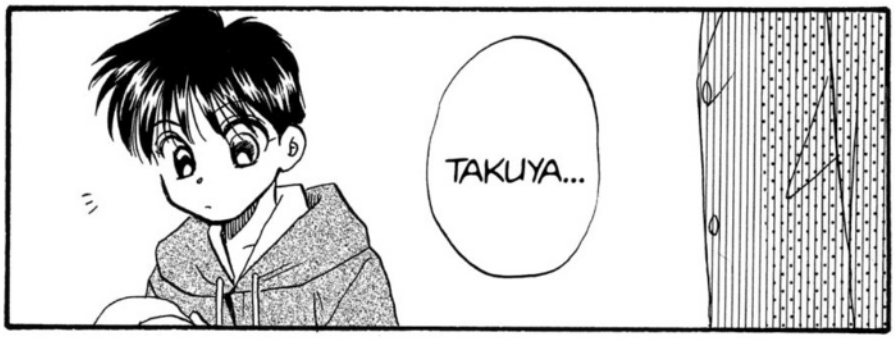
HITOSHI, AFTER SCHOOL, DO YOU WANT TO—
WILL YOU PLEASE NOT TALK TO ME?

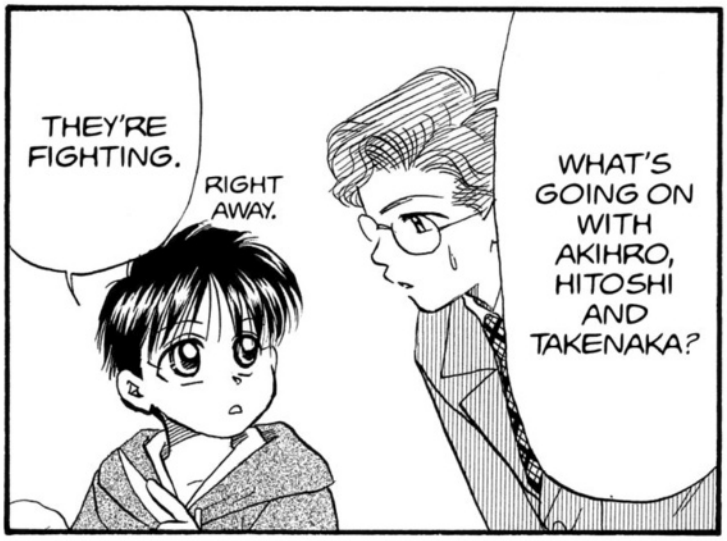
!!
DOOM
SNUB

GEEZ...
...TO TAKUYA...
...IT SEEMED THAT THE THREE WERE PLAYING A GAME OF ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS.
ROCK
LOSES
PAPER
LOSES
SCISSORS
LOSES

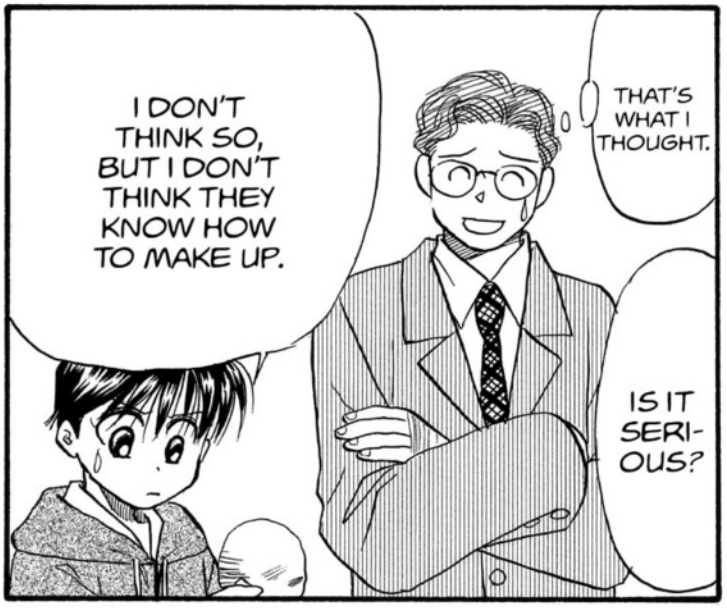

WUNN
WUNN
SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE.

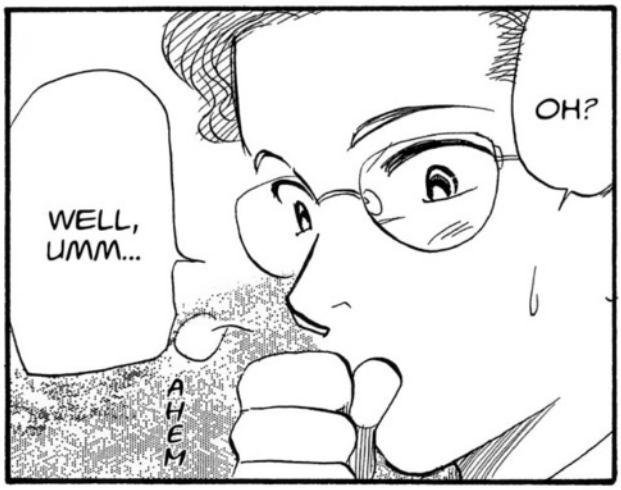

...

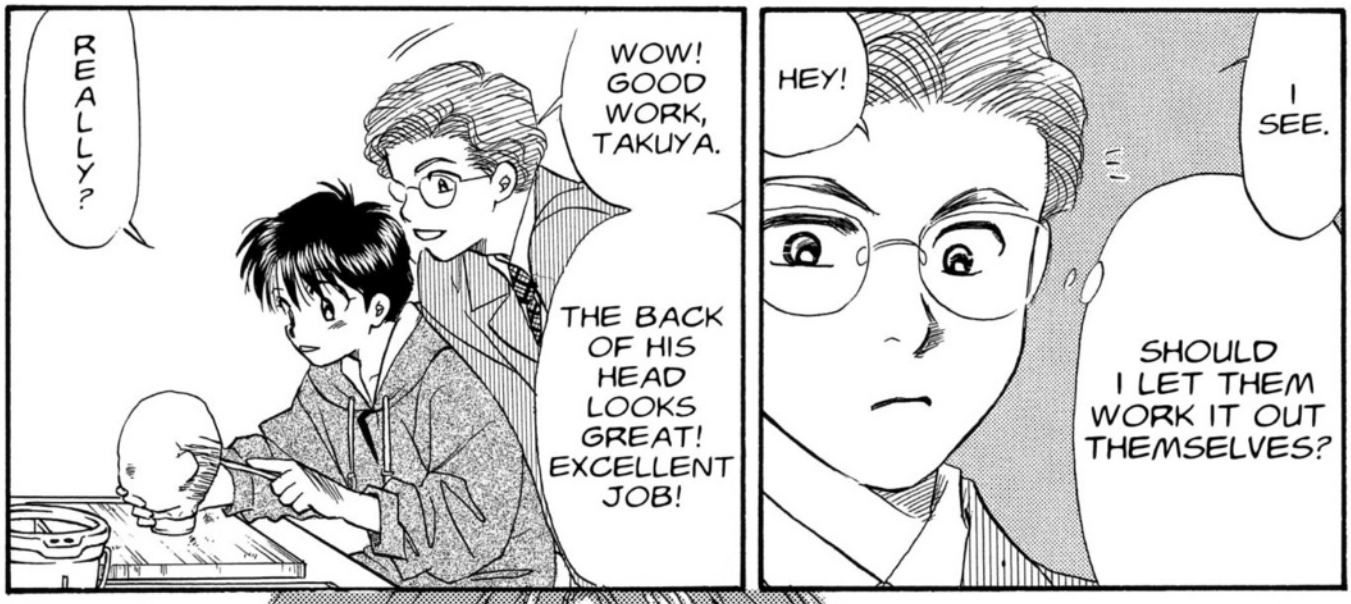

TAKUYA...


WHAT'S GOING ON WITH AKIHRO, HITOSHI AND TAKENAKA?
THEY'RE FIGHTING.
RIGHT AWAY.

...DO YOU KNOW WHERE AKIHIRO IS?
HE WENT TO GET SOME CLEAN WATER.


IS IT SERIOUS?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
I DON'T THINK SO, BUT I DON'T THINK THEY KNOW HOW TO MAKE UP.

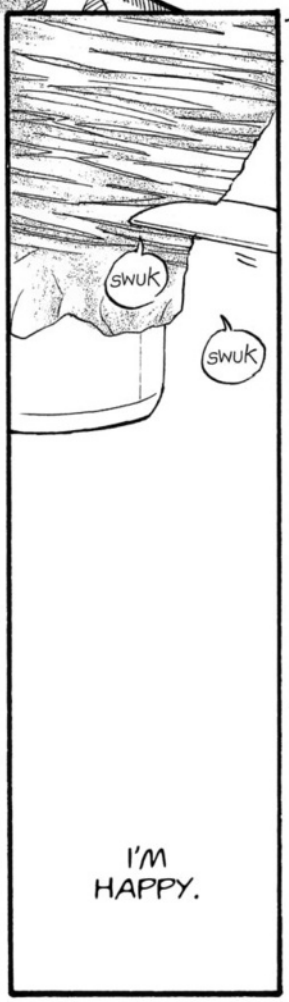

OH?
WELL, UMM...
AHEM

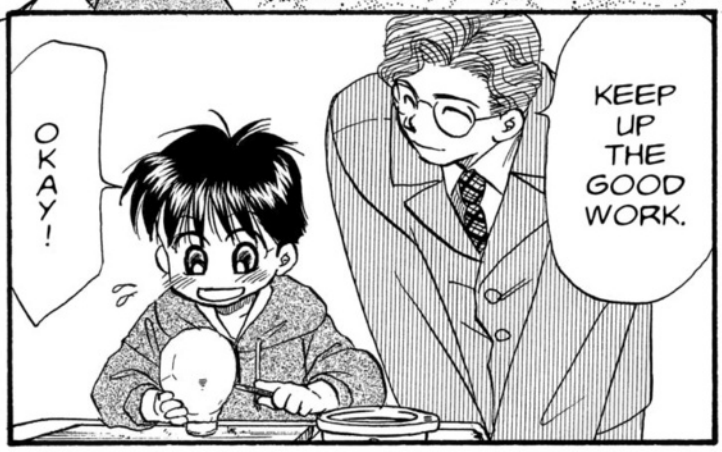

WOW! GOOD WORK, TAKUYA.
REALLY?
THE BACK OF HIS HEAD LOOKS GREAT! EXCELLENT JOB!

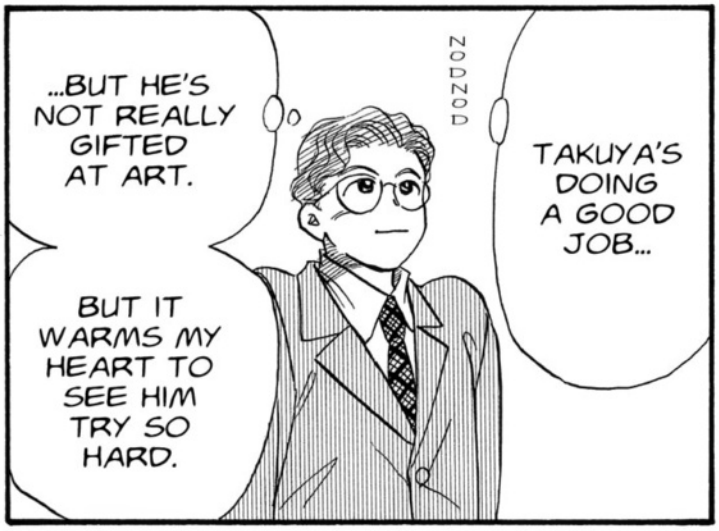
HEY!
I SEE.
SHOULD I LET THEM WORK IT OUT THEMSELVES?

...

HE SAID I WAS DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB! AND I'M USUALLY NOT VERY GOOD AT ART! ♡

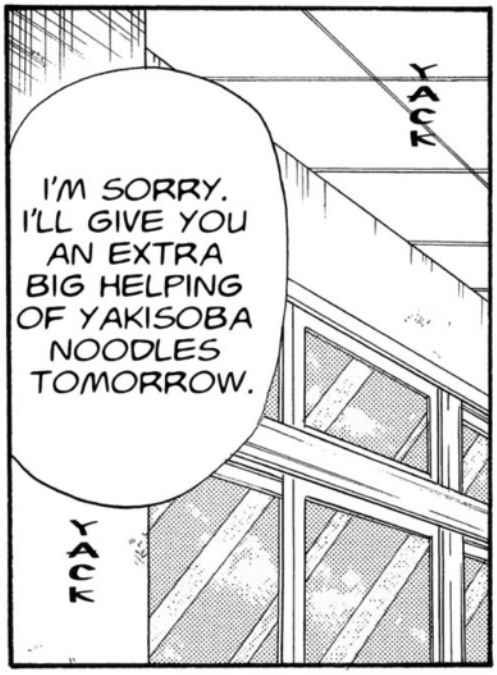

SWUK
SWUK
I'M HAPPY.

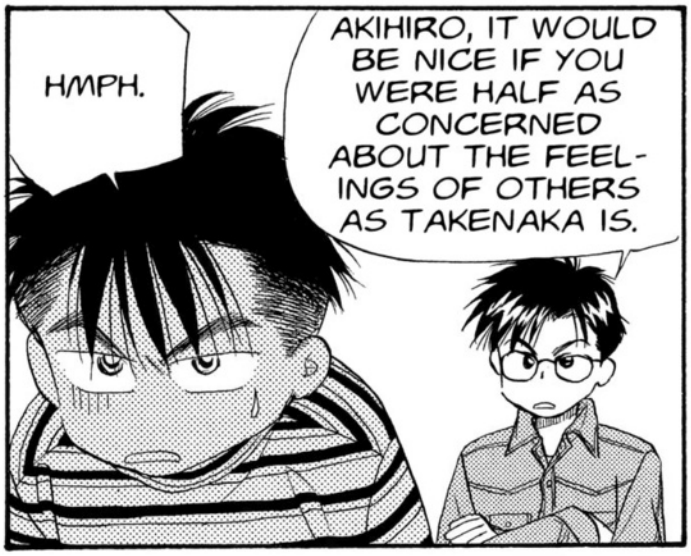

OKAY!
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

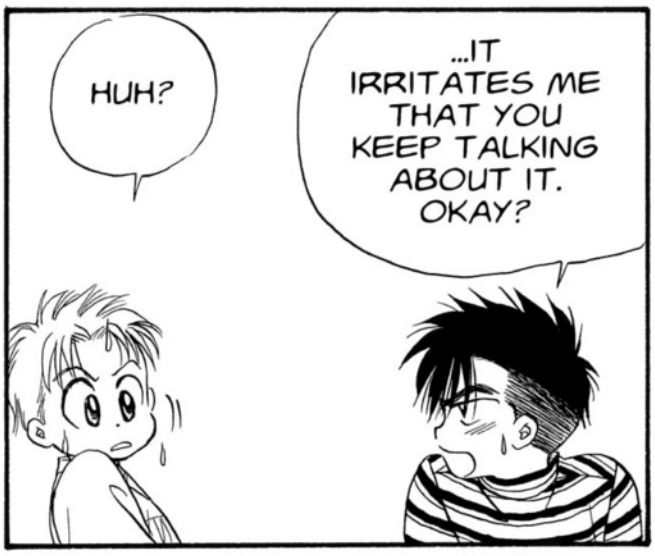

...BUT HE'S NOT REALLY GIFTED AT ART.
BUT IT WARMS MY HEART TO SEE HIM TRY SO HARD.
NODNOD
TAKUYA'S DOING A GOOD JOB...

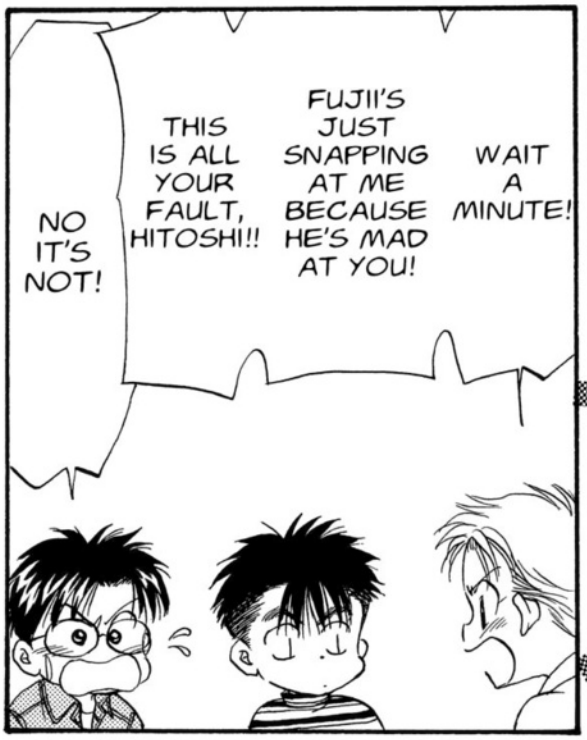
LISTEN, I DON'T EVEN CARE ABOUT THAT ANY-MORE.
BUT ...
UH?

TAKENAKA...
I THOUGHT I SERVED EVERYBODY.
DON'T WASTE WATER!
KSHHH
MOPE


YACK
I'M SORRY. I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXTRA BIG HELPING OF YAKISOBA NOODLES TOMORROW.
YACK

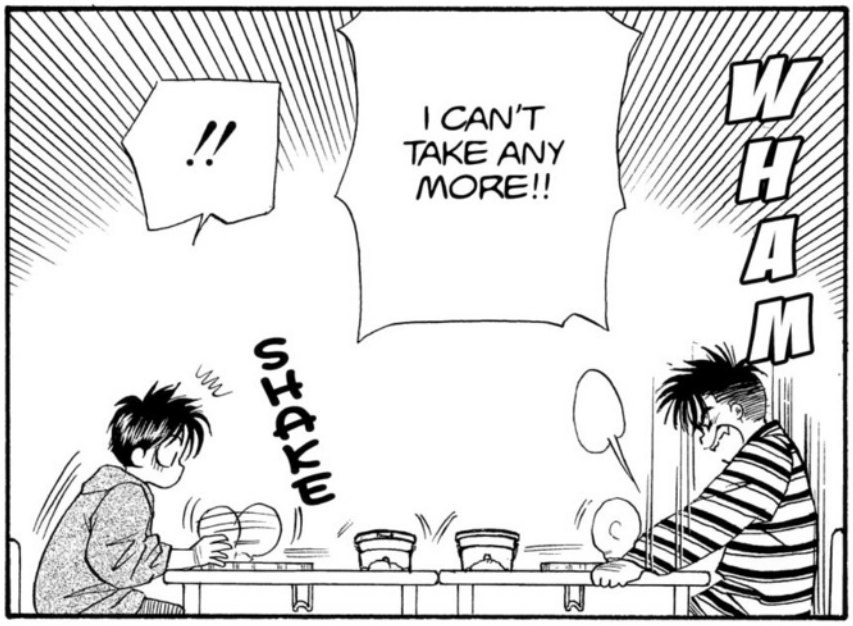

HMPH.
AKIHIRO, IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOU WERE HALF AS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FEEL-INGS OF OTHERS AS TAKENAKA IS.

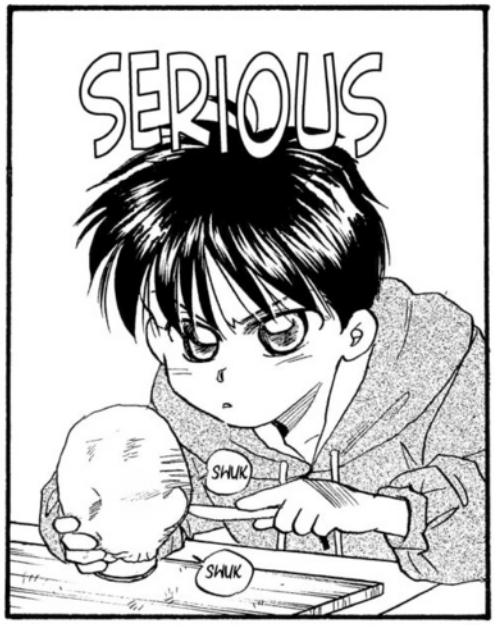

HUH?
...IT IRRITATES ME THAT YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT IT. OKAY?

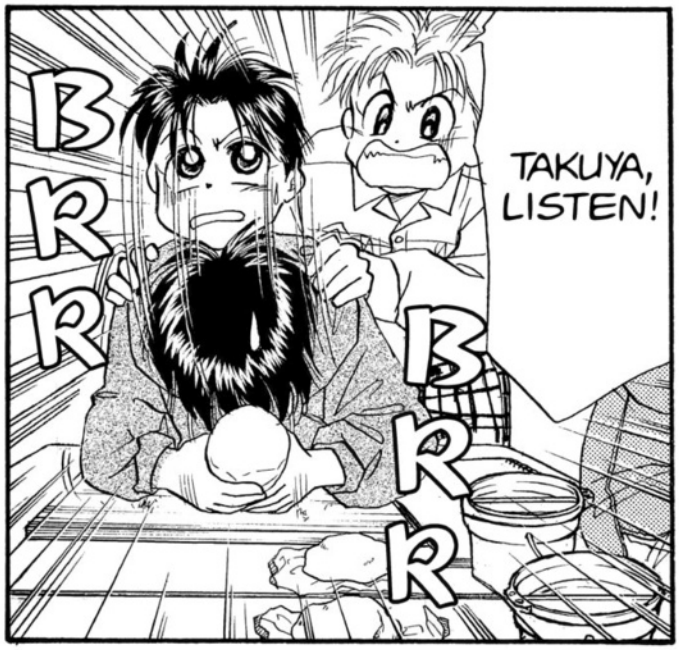

NO IT'S NOT!
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, HITOSHI!!
FUJII'S JUST SNAPPING AT ME BECAUSE HE'S MAD AT YOU!
WAIT A MINUTE!

WHAT?
SHUT UP! YOU GOT MAD ABOUT NOTHING!!
YOU DRIVE ME CRAZY!!

BUT WHY DO I HAVE TO SUFFER?
I WORKED HARD ON THAT AND YOU **WRECKED** IT!!
I WAS ONLY GIVING YOU A FEW SUGGESTIONS SO YOUR DRAWING WOULDN'T LOOK SO WEIRD!
...
THROB THROB THROB
NO FAIR!!
YAP YAP YAP

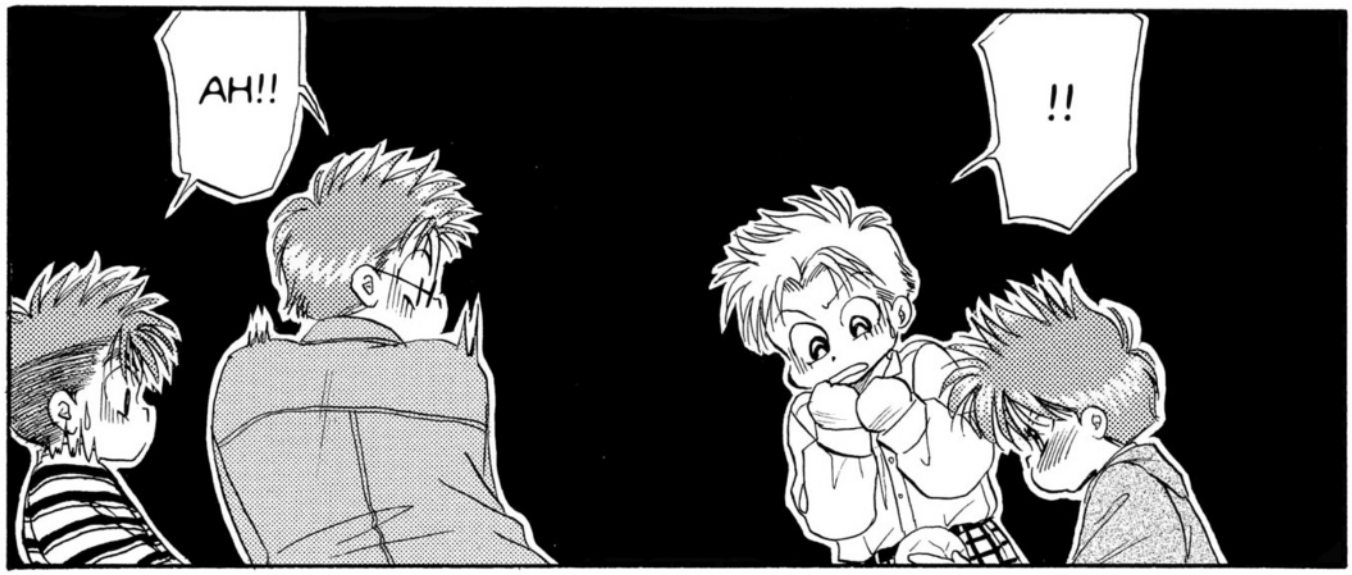

!!
I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE!!
SHAKE
WHAM


SERIOUS
SHUK
SHUK


TAKUYA, LISTEN!
BRRR
BRRR

!
NEI-THER CAN I!!
WUMP
PLONK

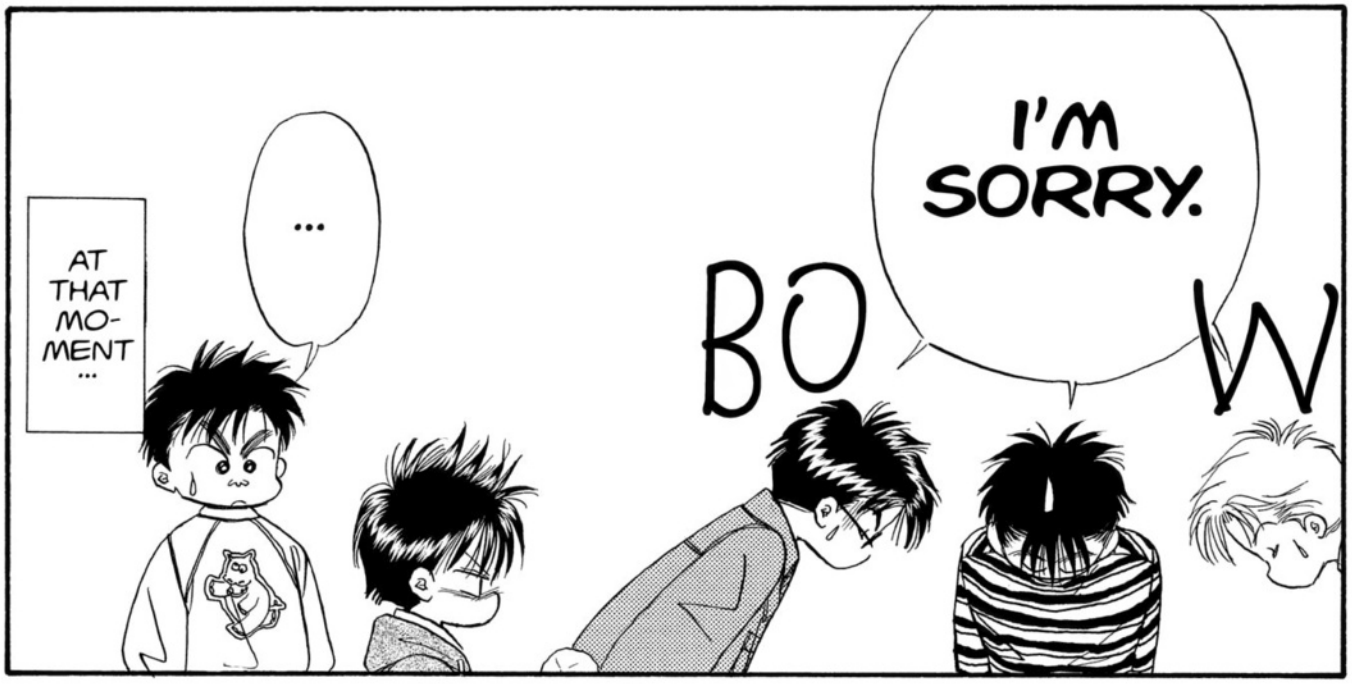
RRMMMM
THE SHORT HAIR IS SMASHED FLAT.
?!
DOOM


AH!!
!!

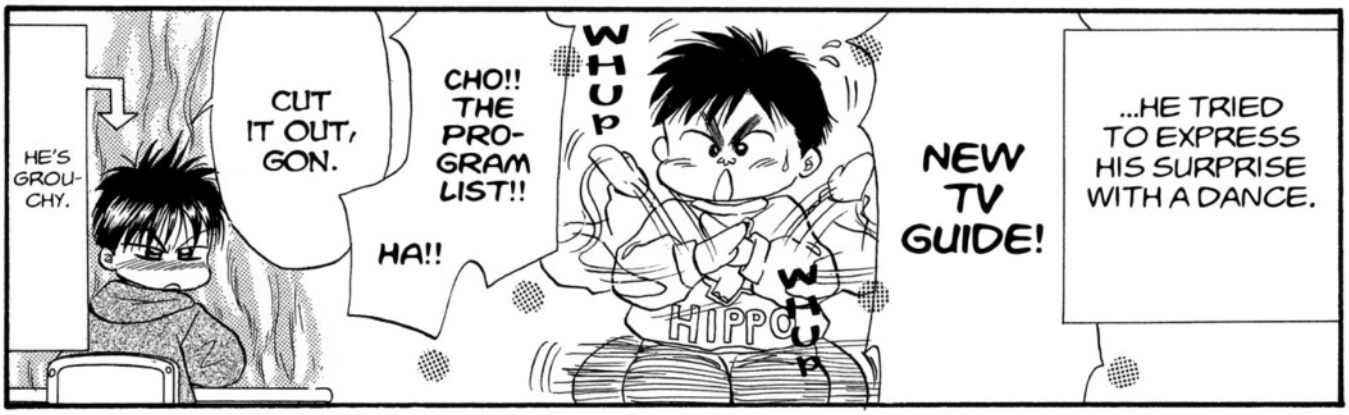
AH!
OKAY!
GULP

STOP THIS STUPID FIGHTING RIGHT NOW!!
YOU GUYS...

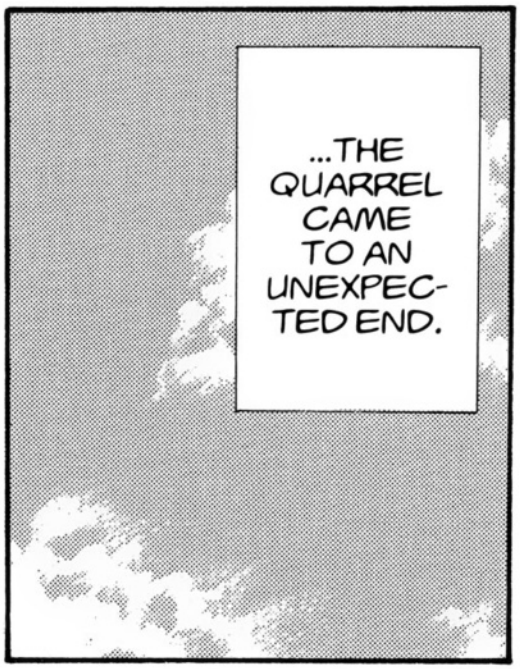
TAKUYA?
H-HEY ...


AT THAT MO-MENT ...
...
I'M SORRY.
BOW

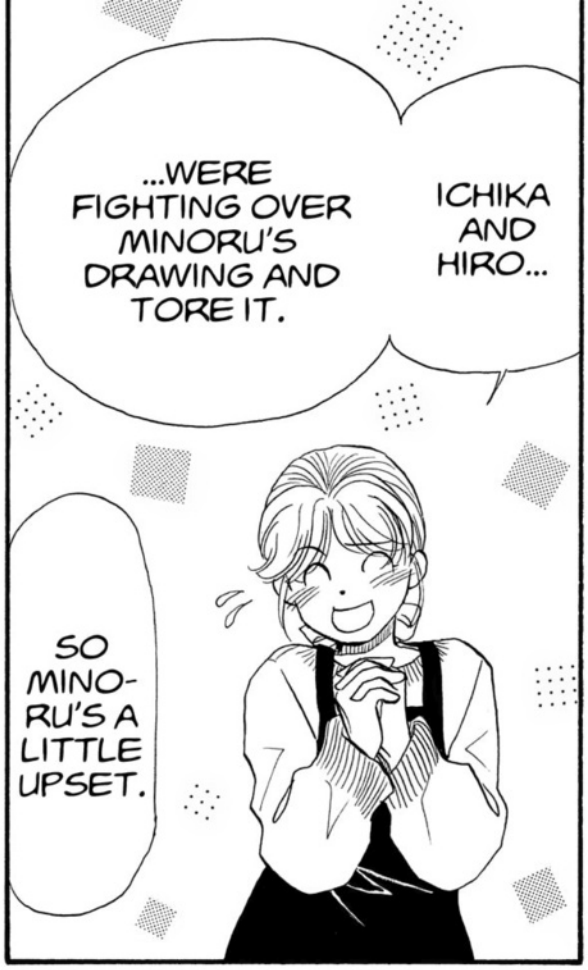
SHEEN
TAKUYA
TOP
BASE
SO...
...TAKUYA STANDING ATOP THE EVOLUTIONARY PYRAMID.
...GON SEEMED TO SEE...
WOW... AMAZING!

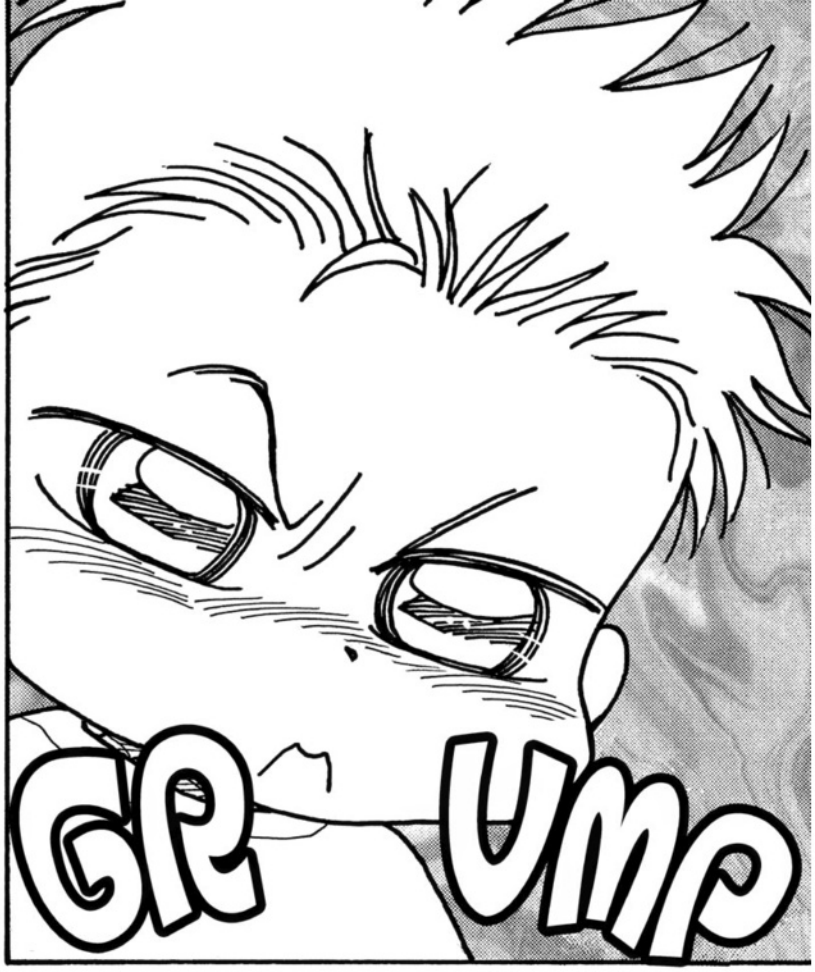

HE'S GROUCHY.
CUT IT OUT, GON.
CHO!! THE PROGRAM LIST!!
HA!!
WHUP
WHUP
HIPPO
NEW TV GUIDE!
...HE TRIED TO EXPRESS HIS SURPRISE WITH A DANCE.

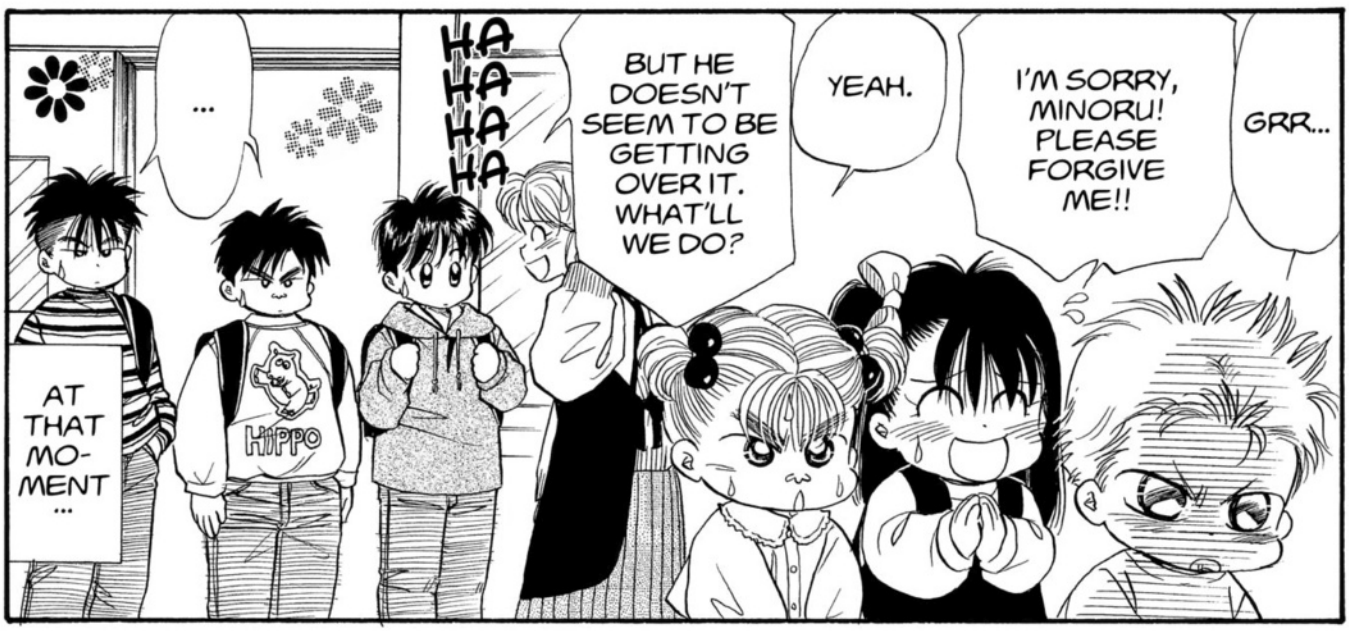
YACK
YACK


...THE QUARREL CAME TO AN UNEXPECTED END.

THIS IS NORMAL FOR KIDS.
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
AND THAT'S HOW...
HE'S SCARED







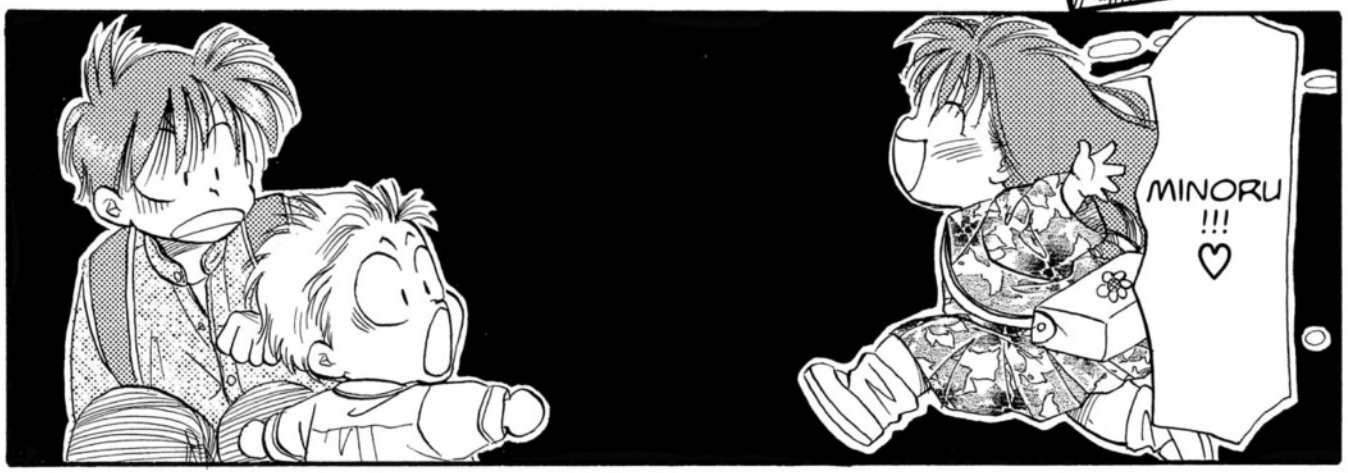
...IT WAS PLAIN TO EVERYBODY THAT TAKUYA AND MINORU WERE BROTHERS.

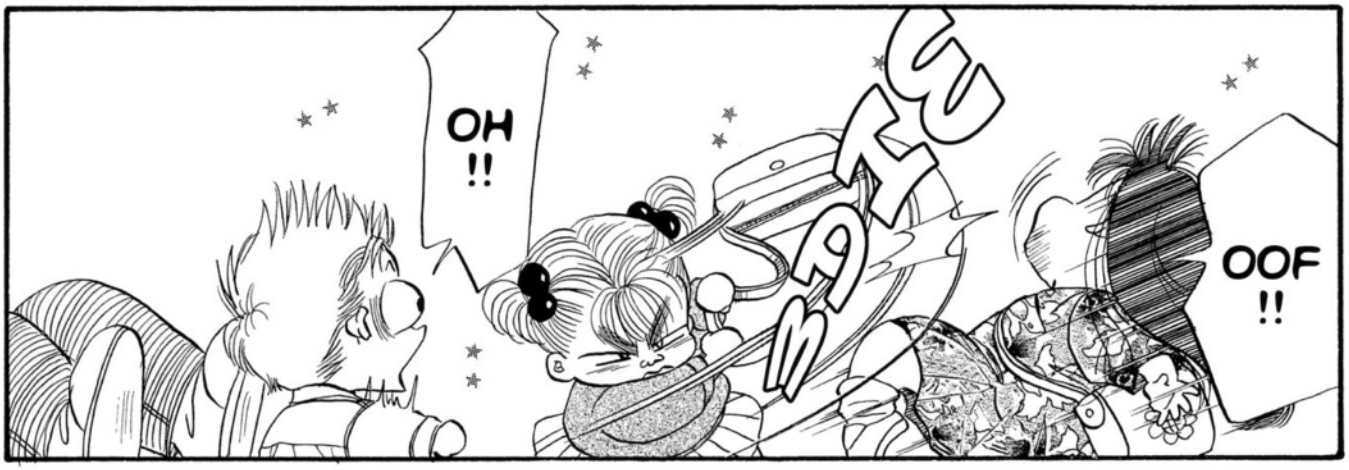
Chapter 81 / The End

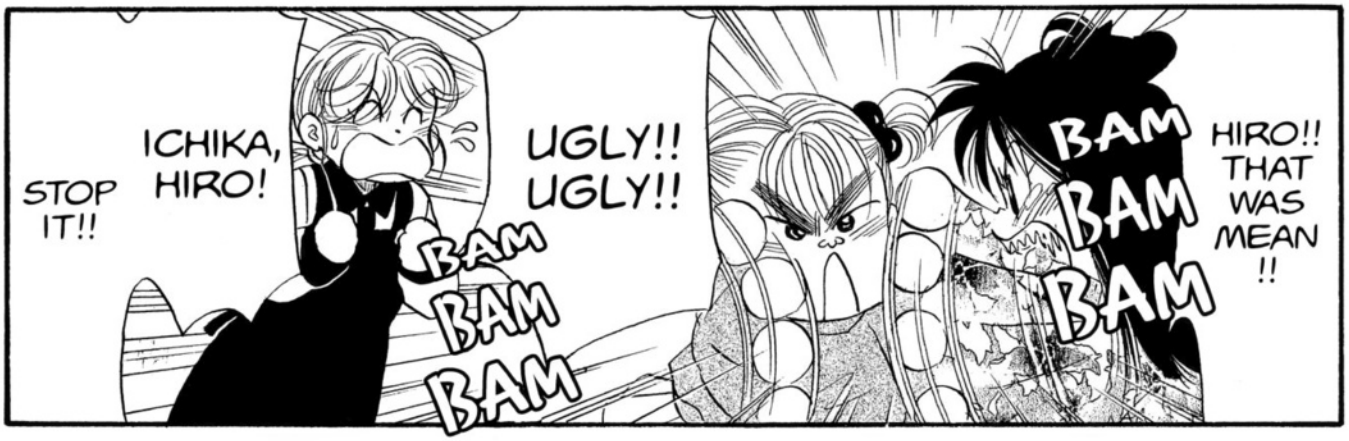
BABY & Me
Chapter 82

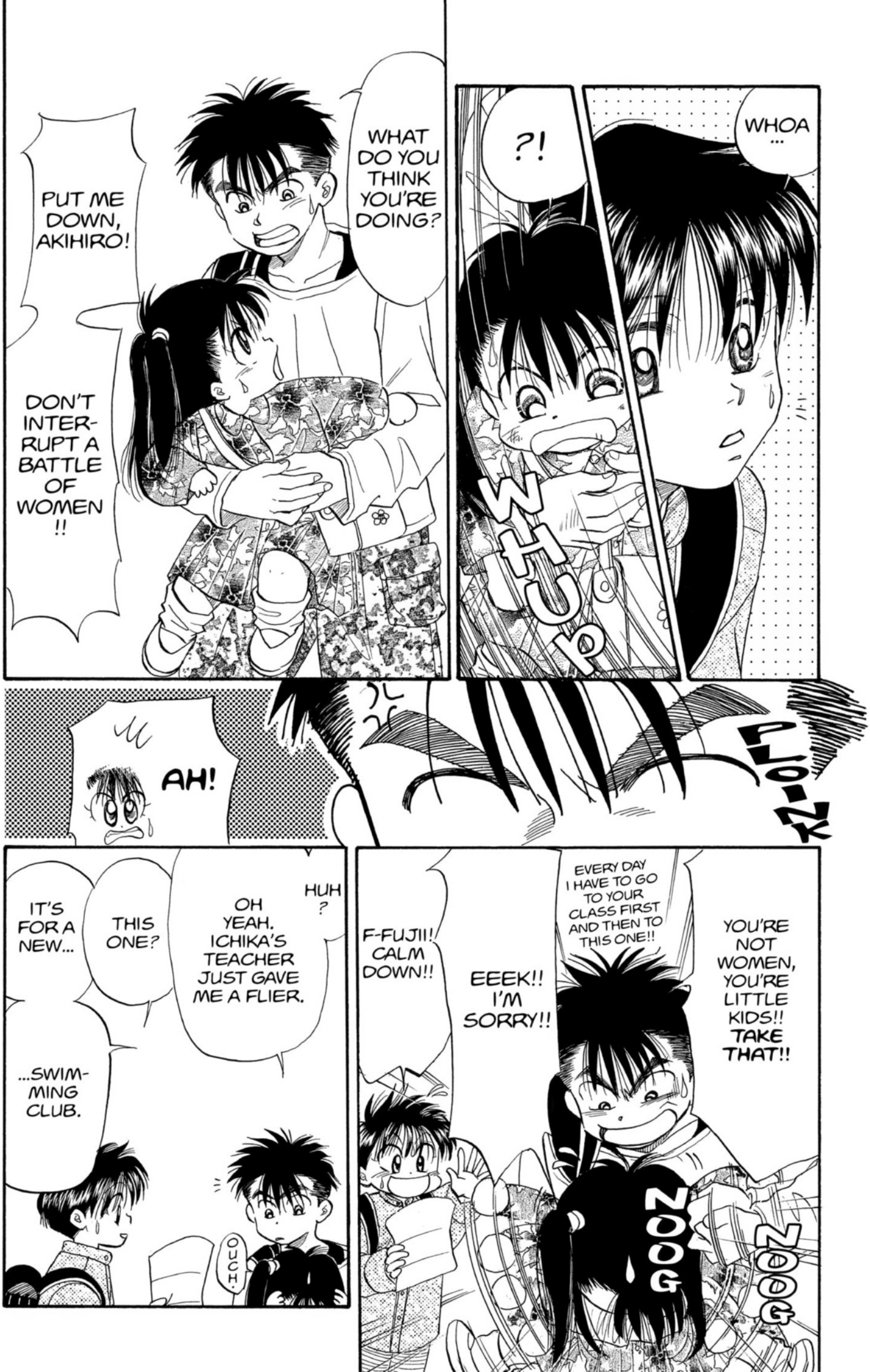
HEY!
WUZZ
THIS SWIMMING SCHOOL IS OFFERING ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASSES. THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
YEAH. AND THERE'S A CLASS FOR HIRO AND MINORU TOO.
GRAND OPENING
GREEN SWIMMING CLUB
ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASSES
TERM 5/1 – 5/26
CLASS SIZE 5 – 10 STUDENTS
INFANTS AND CHILDREN UNDER SIX MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR ATTENDANT.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1ST & 2ND GRADES / 3RD & 4TH GRADES
5TH & 6TH GRADES / JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS TIMES
CLASS FEE PER PERSON 50 Y
XXX KUMANOI CITY, TOKYO
XX-XXX
YACK
YOU MIGHT WANT TO MAKE A RESERVATION. A LOT OF PEOPLE SEEM INTERESTED.
IT'S A NEW SCHOOL, SO THEY'RE PASSING OUT FLIERS.
YACK
WUZZ
MINORU ...
...HAS NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.
THEN HOW 'BOUT THIS SUNDAY?
YETH.
NOD
WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO A SWIMMING POOL? THE WATER'S HEATED.
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MINORU?

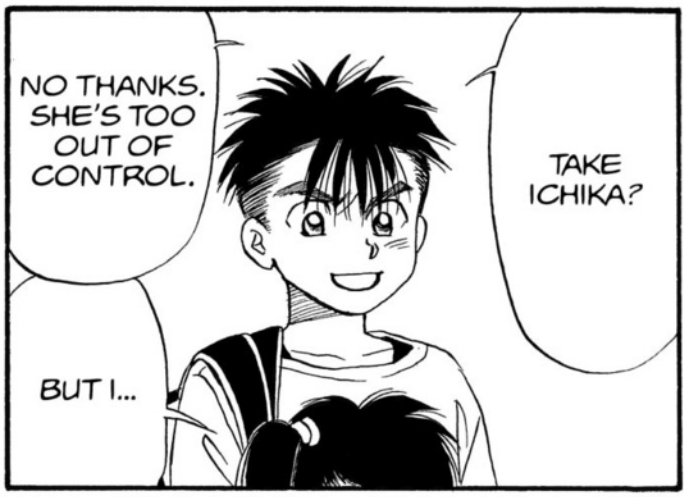
...RU !!!
MINO ...
BOOM
TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP


MINORU !!! ♡


OH !!
MINORU
OOF !!


STOP IT!!
ICHIKA, HIRO!
UGLY!! UGLY!!
BAM BAM BAM
BAM BAM BAM
HIRO!! THAT WAS MEAN !!


WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
PUT ME DOWN, AKIHIRO!
DON'T INTER-RUPT A BATTLE OF WOMEN !!
WHOA ...
?!
WHUP
AH!
PLOINK
HUH ?
OH YEAH. ICHIKA'S TEACHER JUST GAVE ME A FLIER.
THIS ONE?
IT'S FOR A NEW...
...SWIM-MING CLUB.
OUCH.
F-FUJII! CALM DOWN!!
EEEK!! I'M SORRY!!
EVERY DAY I HAVE TO GO TO YOUR CLASS FIRST AND THEN TO THIS ONE!!
YOU'RE NOT WOMEN, YOU'RE LITTLE KIDS!! TAKE THAT!!
NOOG
NOOG


TAKE ICHIKA?
NO THANKS. SHE'S TOO OUT OF CONTROL.
BUT I...

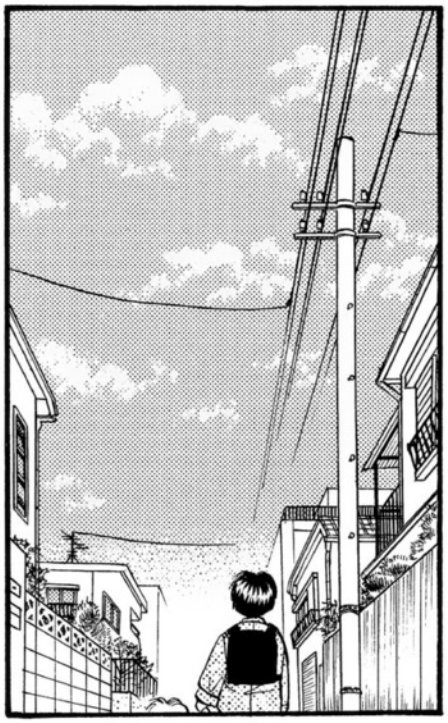
GON AND I ARE THINKING ABOUT TAKING HIRO AND MINORU THERE.
RIGHT?
YEAH.
WANNA COME WITH US, FUJII? WE'LL MAKE A RESERVATION FOR YOU.
ME?

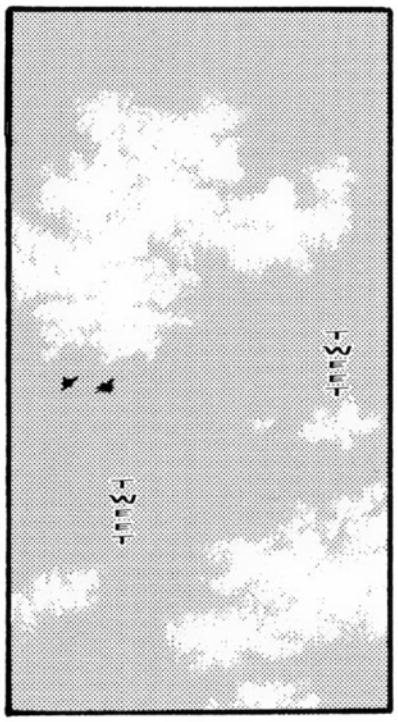
HUH?
I WANNA GO!!

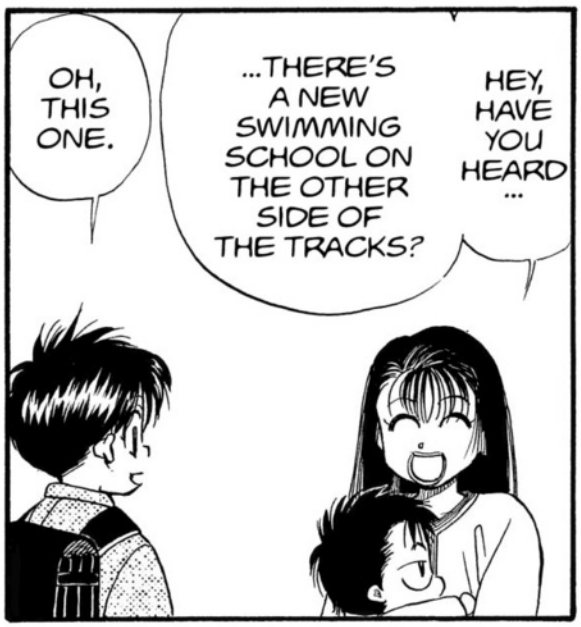
WELL, WE'D BETTER BE GOING.
SEE YA!
WHUP
I WANNA GO!!
I WANNA GO!!
WAAAAH
B-BYE.
BYE.

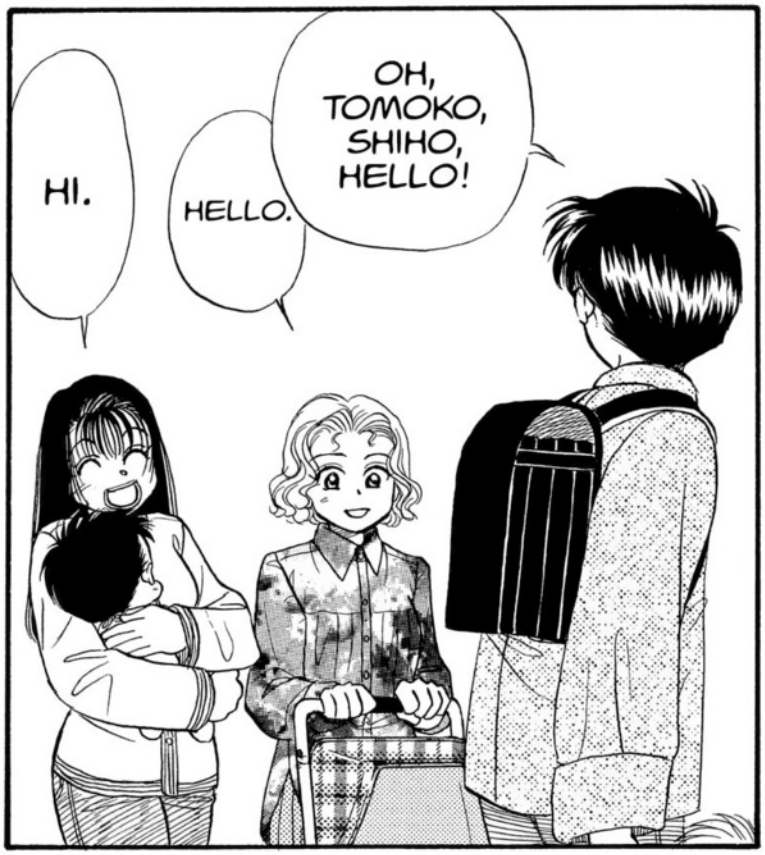
I WANNA GO!!!!
TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP
HE RAN OFF.
WOW. IT'S THE DOP-PLER EFFECT!

TAKUYA!
MINORU!
HUH?

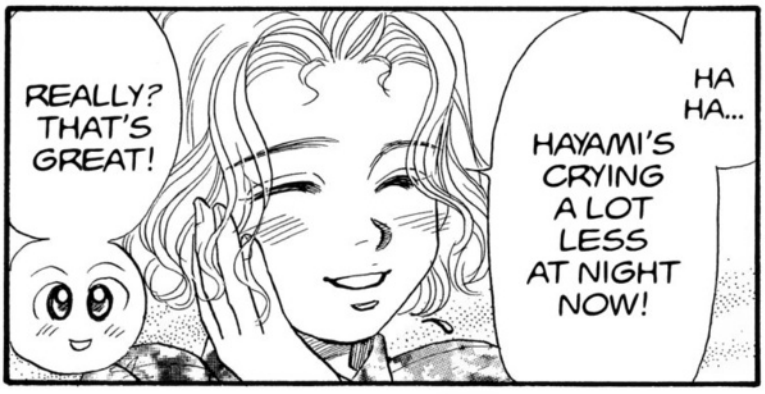


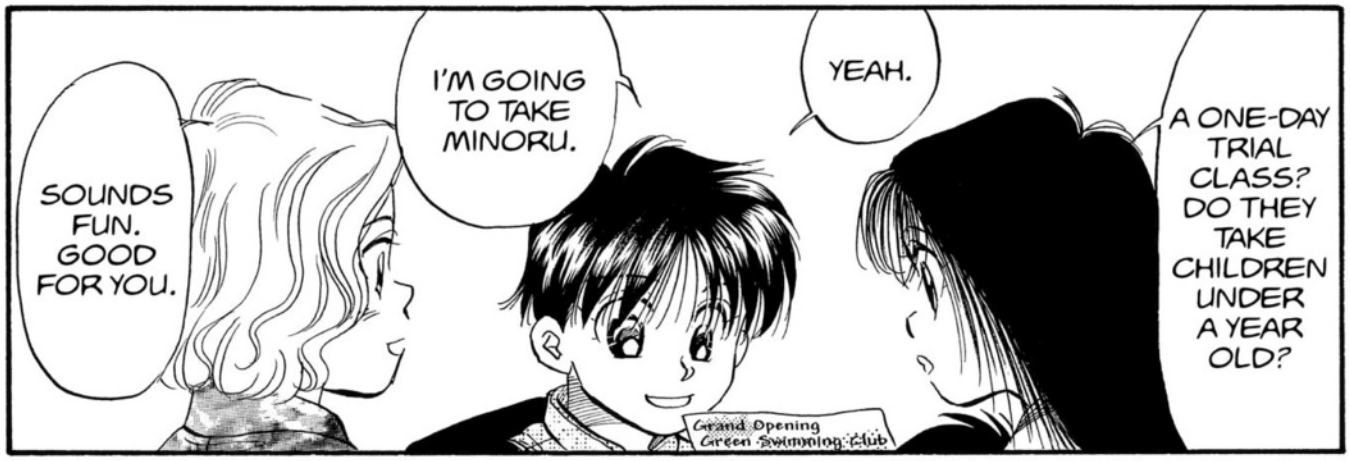

TWEET
TWEET

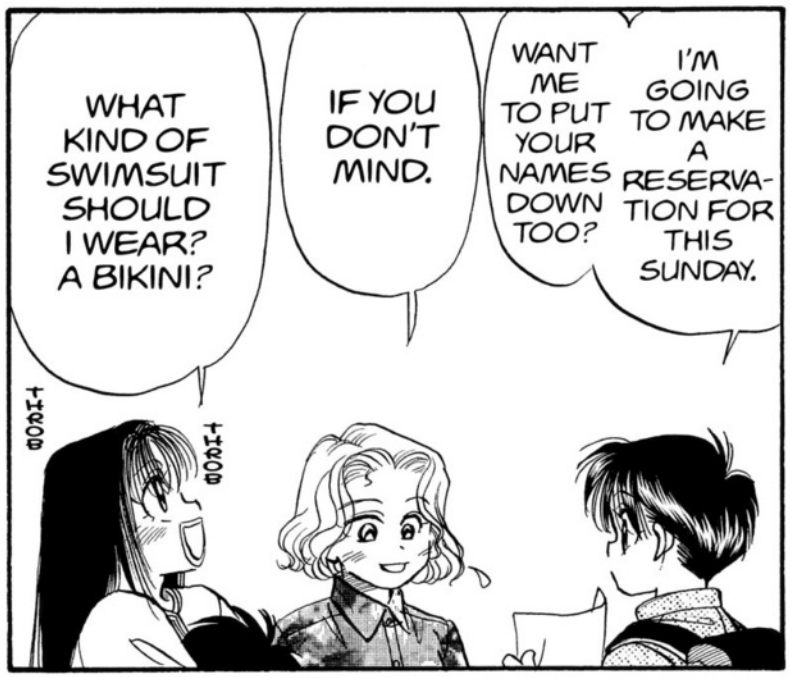

OH, THIS ONE.
...THERE'S A NEW SWIMMING SCHOOL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS?
HEY, HAVE YOU HEARD ...

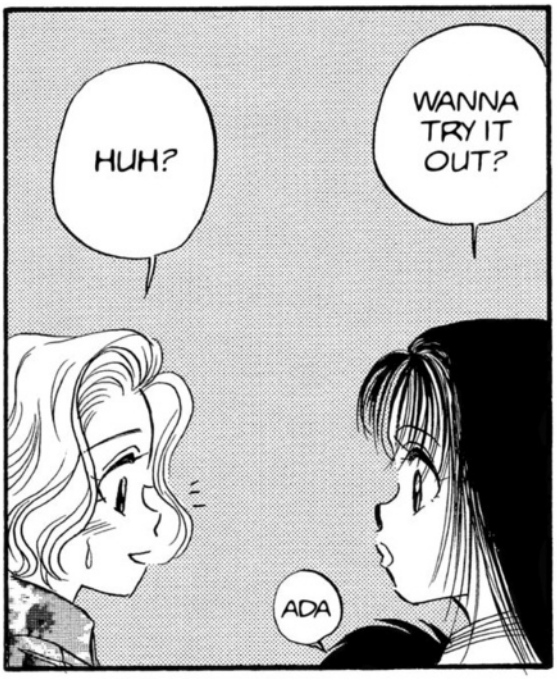

HI.
HELLO.
OH, TOMOKO, SHIHO, HELLO!

THIS ONE.
HUH? WHICH ONE?
WIP
WIP


REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!
HA HA...
HAYAMI'S CRYING A LOT LESS AT NIGHT NOW!


SOUNDS FUN. GOOD FOR YOU.
I'M GOING TO TAKE MINORU.
YEAH.
A ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASS? DO THEY TAKE CHILDREN UNDER A YEAR OLD?
Grand Opening Green Swimming Club

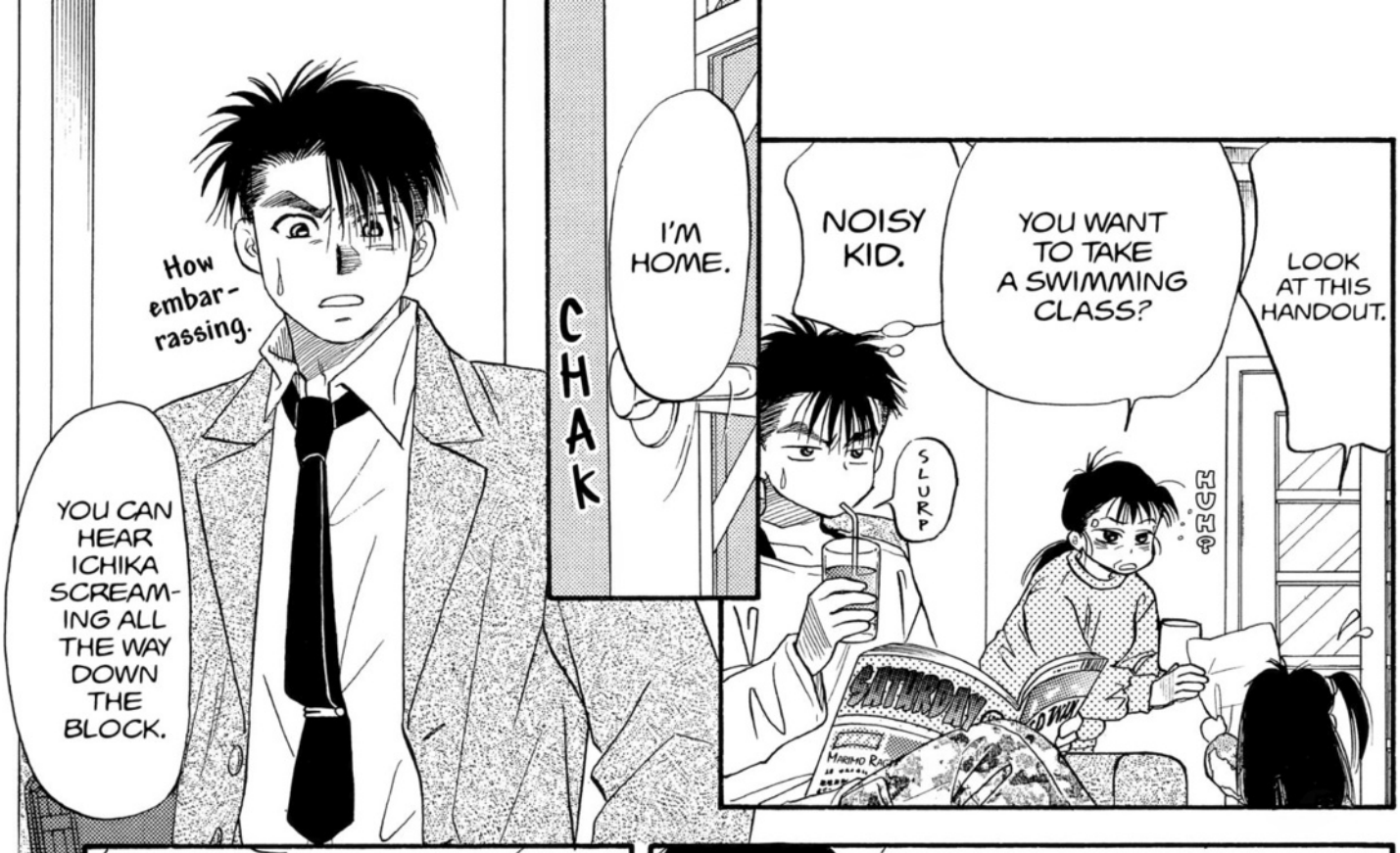

WHAT KIND OF SWIMSUIT SHOULD I WEAR? A BIKINI?
IF YOU DON'T MIND.
WANT ME TO PUT YOUR NAMES DOWN TOO?
I'M GOING TO MAKE A RESERVATION FOR THIS SUNDAY.
THROB
THROB


HUH?
WANNA TRY IT OUT?
ADA

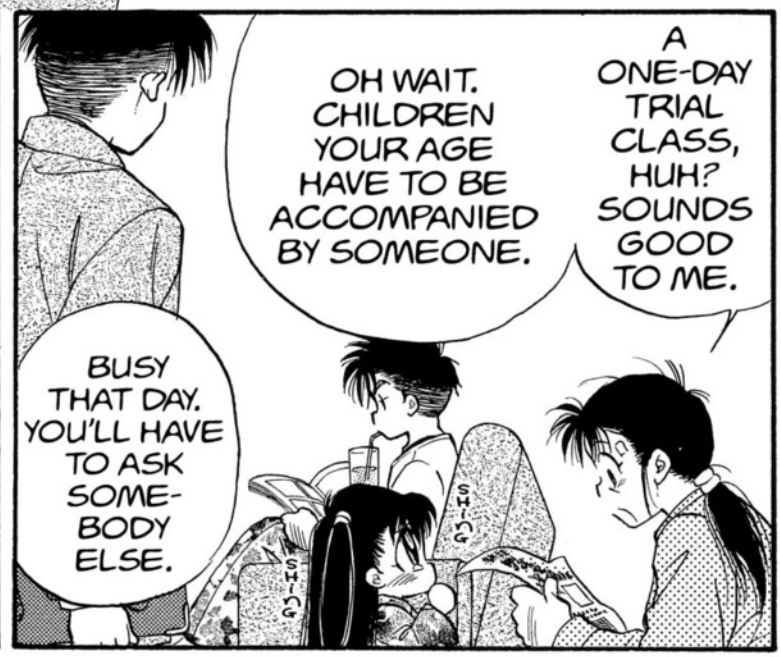
STAYED UP ALL NIGHT.
SWIMMING POOL?

I WANT TO GO TO THE SWIMMING POOL TOO!!
PLEASE, MOTHER!!

I WANNA GO!!
I WANNA GO!!


How embar-rassing.
CHAK
I'M HOME.
NOISY KID.
YOU WANT TO TAKE A SWIMMING CLASS?
LOOK AT THIS HANDOUT.
SLURP
HUHP?
YOU CAN HEAR ICHIKA SCREAM-ING ALL THE WAY DOWN THE BLOCK.

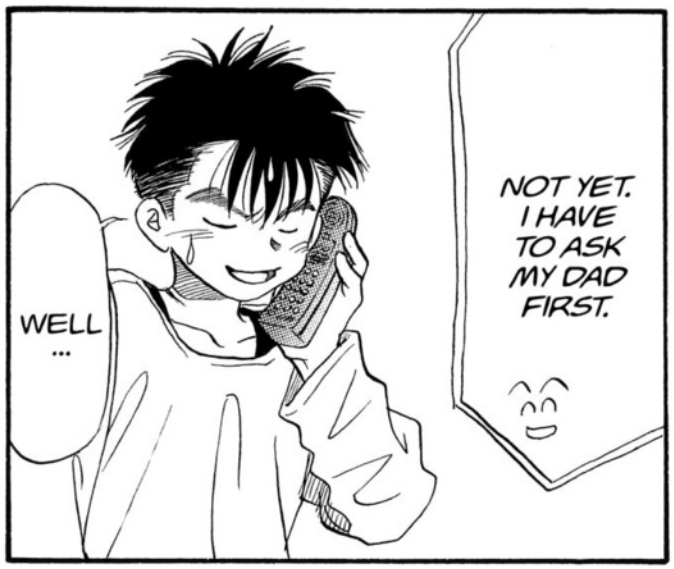
AGH! NO WAY!
OMOYA!
I JUST GOT HOME! DON'T CLING TO ME!
WHOMP

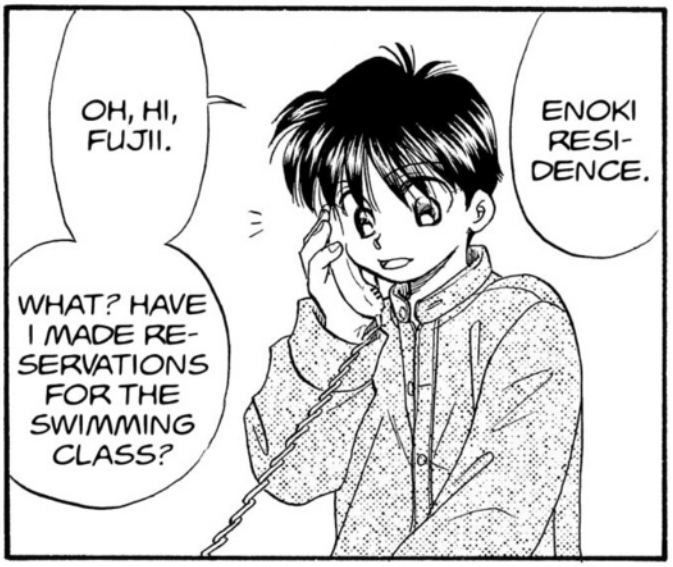

OH WAIT. CHILDREN YOUR AGE HAVE TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY SOMEONE.
A ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASS, HUH? SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
BUSY THAT DAY. YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK SOME-BODY ELSE.
SHING
SHING

JERK.
HEH HEH HEH
YOU KNOW WHY! IT'S YOUR FATE!

WHY ME?
FWIP
THIS KIND OF THING IS YOUR JOB, AKIHIRO!

WAH!!
JUMP
M-MA-BO?
BIPUI
UH-OH ...
I... I...
SOB
SOB
LOOK HERE.
SOB
SOB
WAAAAAH
I WANNA GO TOO!!
RINGGGG
RINGGGG
KLAK
HELLO...


WELL ...
NOT YET. I HAVE TO ASK MY DAD FIRST.


ENOKI RESIDENCE.
OH, HI, FUJII.
WHAT? HAVE I MADE RESERVATIONS FOR THE SWIMMING CLASS?

COULD YOU MAKE THEM FOR TWO MORE KIDS ON THE SAME DAY?
YEAH, ICHIKA AND MA-BO.
BOING
BOING
YAY! YAY!
THIS TIME IT WAS HIS FATE TOO.
GRUMP
I'M GOIN' TO DE POOL! ♡
FWUP
FWUP

IN THE END TAKUYA MADE RESERVATIONS FOR SIX CHILDREN ALTOGETHER.
OH.
MR. HIRATSUKA ...
YEAH?
SLURP

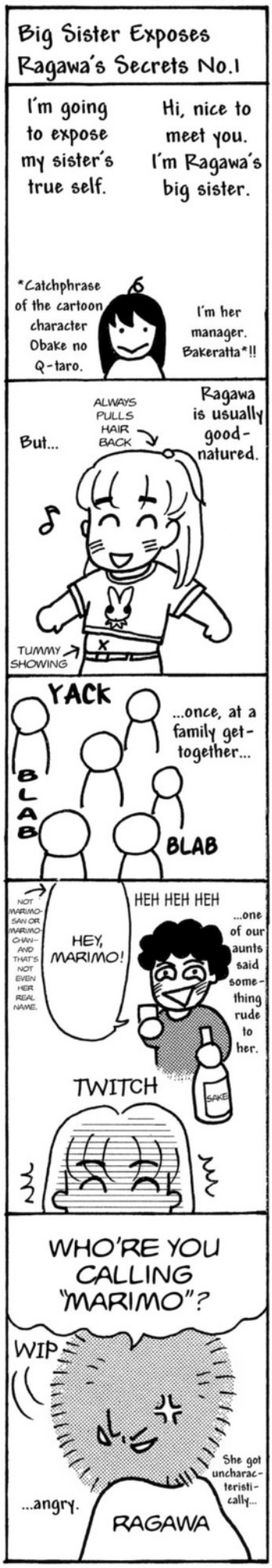
GIGGLE
THE BABY CLASS IS A BREEZE. I'LL LET THE ATTENDANTS DO ALL THE WORK.
SLURP
SURE.
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING SCHEDULED UNTIL THE EVENING.
WE'VE GOT SIX CHILDREN SIGNED UP FOR THE ZERO THROUGH FIVE TRIAL CLASS. CAN YOU TAKE IT ON SUNDAY AT TEN?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, YOU KNOW.
ARE YOU SURE YOU REALLY WANT TO LEARN TO SWIM?
'CAUSE YOU'RE A LOUSY TEACHER!
OF COURSE NOT!
GRRR
SMILE
HEY, RYO.
HAVE YOU LEARNED HOW TO BREATHE WHILE YOU SWIM YET?

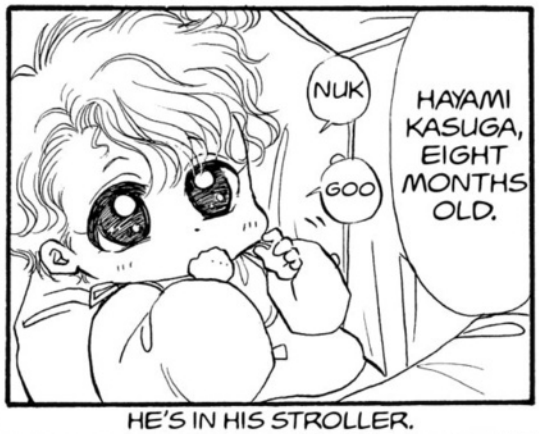
AH!
OW !!
THWAK
TWITCH
...
VEEN

MY OWN SON! WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?
That really hurt. ← SHIN
BOO-HOO
GEEZ!
UNH...
I HATE YOU, SHOSUKE!
H-HEY! RYO!
DASH

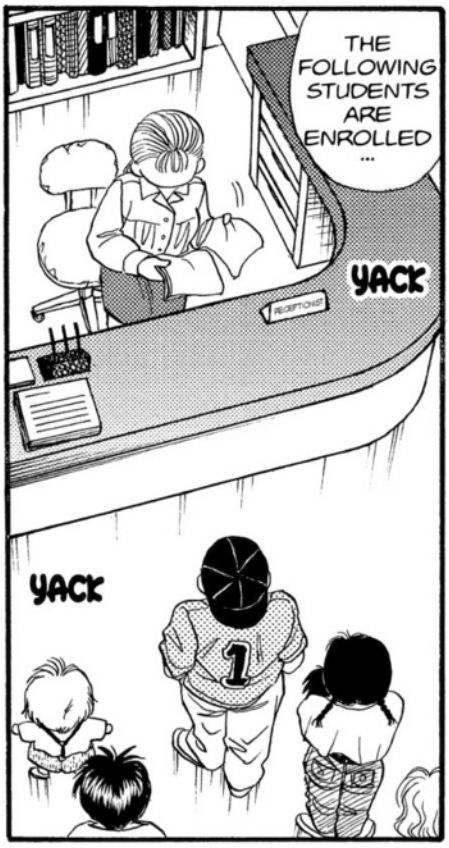
SUNDAY
WHEW ...
WHOA! IT'S BRAND NEW!
GREEN SWIMMING
WOOSH
OH...
ARE YOU HERE FOR THE ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASS?
WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
RECEPTIONIST
THEY ONLY ALLOW ONE ATTENDANT PER CHILD.
Ha! That's a laugh.
THEY WON'T STAY IN BUSINESS LONG...
...IF THEY'RE THAT CHEAP.

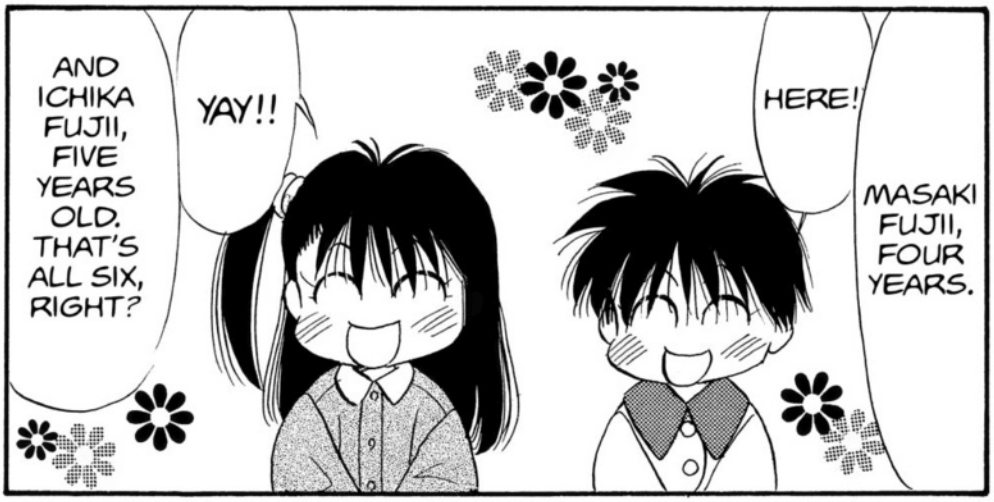
Author's Note: Part 2





HE'S IN HIS STROLLER.





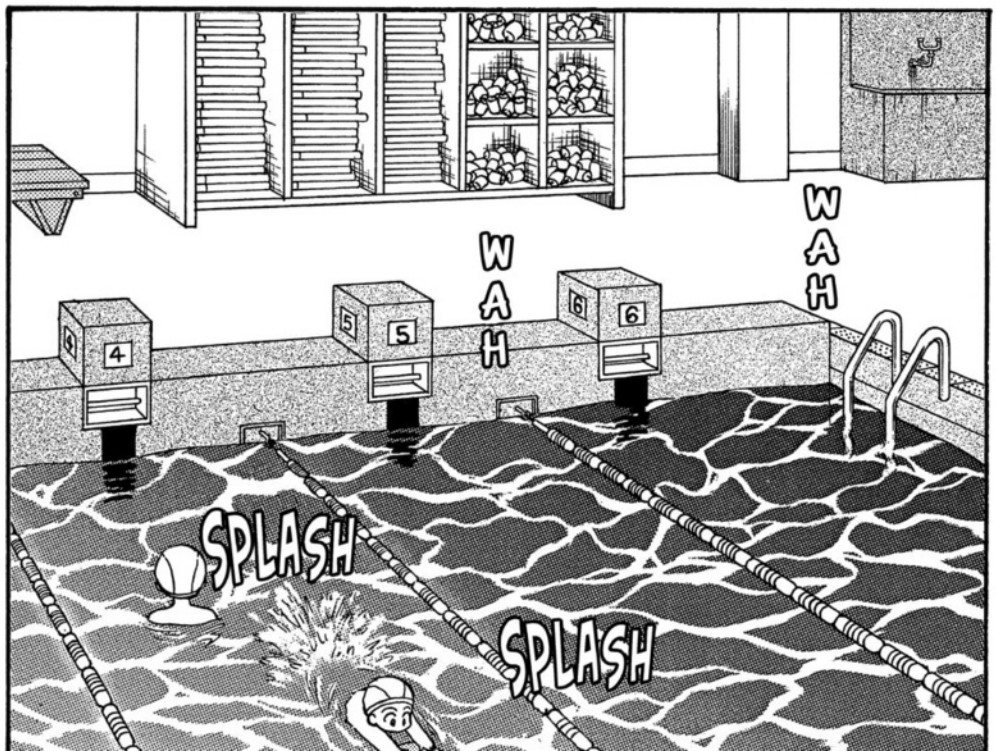
SIX!
FIVE...
FOUR...
THREE...
TWO...
ONE...
SO THERE ARE SIX ATTENDANTS, RIGHT?
Base Ball

DON'T YOU OFFER GROUP DIS-COUNTS?
I'M SORRY, WE DON'T, BUT THE FEE IS ALREADY DISCOUNTED.

STERI-LIZING BATH?
YEAH. IT'S A POOL OF WHITE WATER. I THINK THERE'S CHLORINE IN IT.
WUZZ
WUZZ

THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM IS ON THE RIGHT AND THE MEN'S IS ON THE LEFT.
AFTER YOU'VE CHANGED, TAKE A SHOWER AND SUBMERGE YOURSELF IN THE STERILIZING BATH.
WUZZ
WUZZ

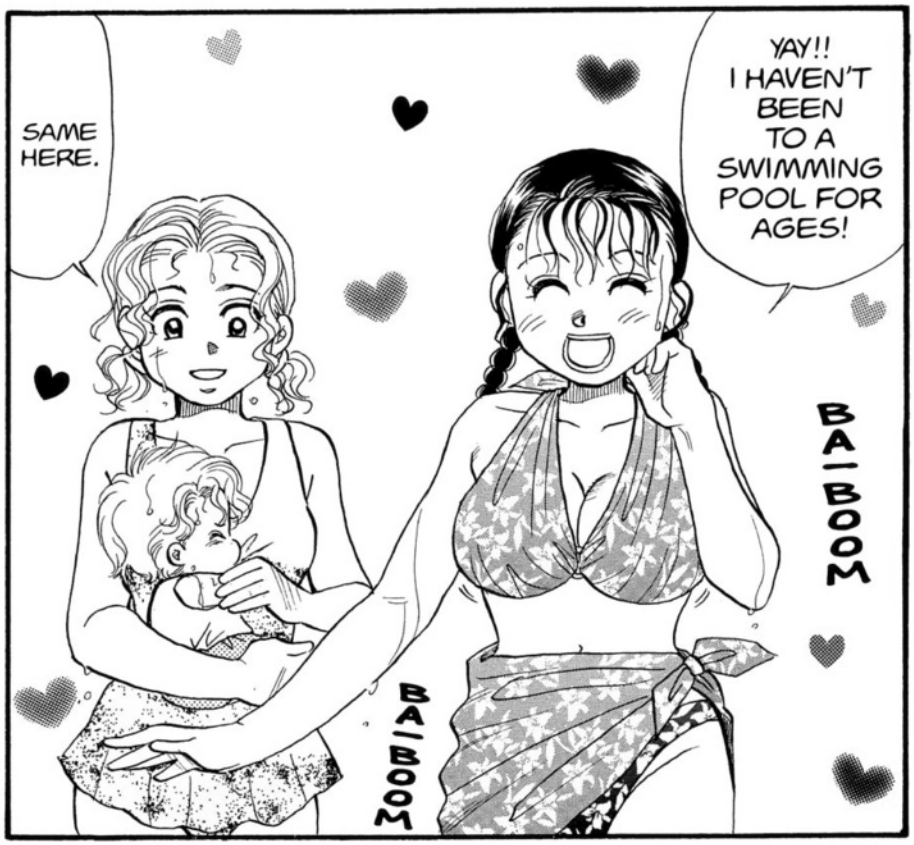
HUH?
WELL, PLEASE COME THIS WAY.
IT'S A VIRTUE TO BE SO TRUSTING.


WAH
WAH
SPLASH
SPLASH

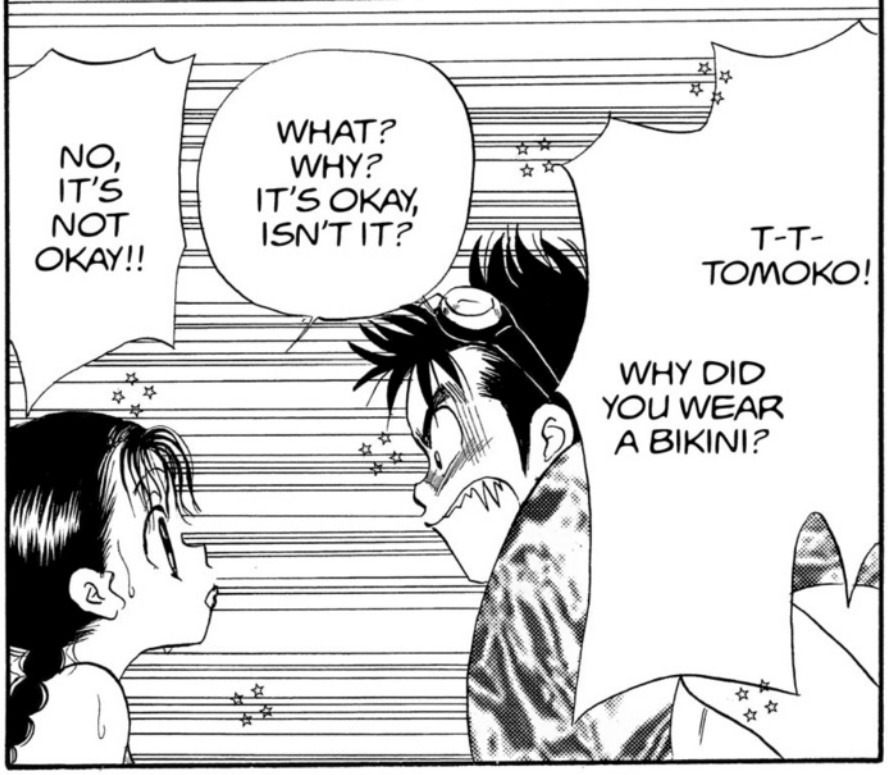
YOUR INSTRUCTOR WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU BESIDE THE POOL.
SEE YOU.
BOW

THANK YOU FOR WAITING.
SPLAP SPLAP
SPLASH SPLASH
WAH WAH
ARE THEY TAKING SWIMMING CLASSES TOO?
DARN! WE HAVE TO SHARE THE POOL.
HMPH.
AHH
GAHE
BA-BOOM

AAAH !!


SAME HERE.
YAY!! I HAVEN'T BEEN TO A SWIMMING POOL FOR AGES!
BA-BOOM
BA-BOOM

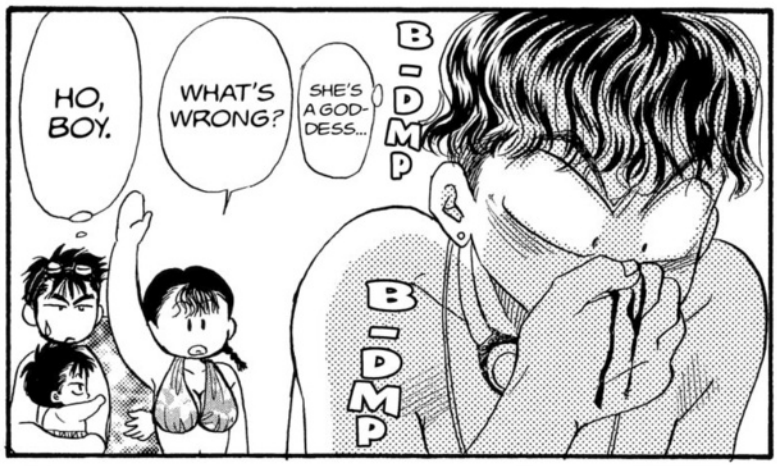
WHY NOT?
TOMOYA! YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO LOOK AT HER!
THWAK


NO, IT'S NOT OKAY!!
WHAT? WHY? IT'S OKAY, ISN'T IT?
T-T-TOMOKO!
WHY DID YOU WEAR A BIKINI?

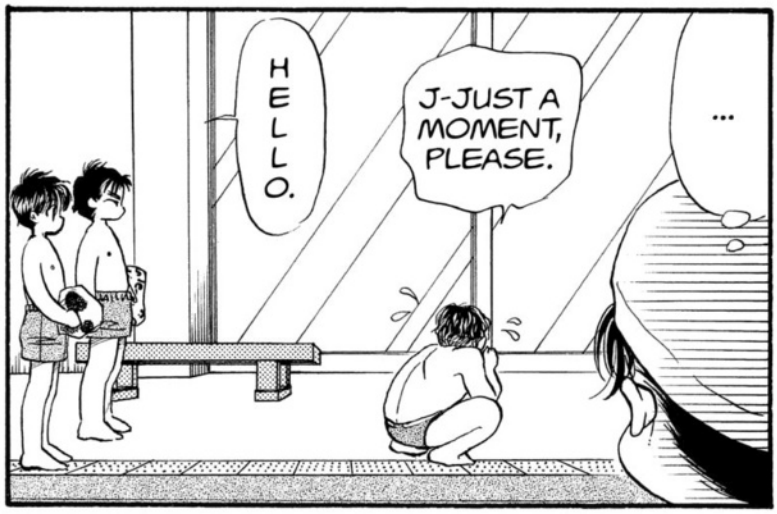
YOU, THERE!
YOU'RE DOING THE ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASS, RIGHT?
!
TWEEE

ALL RIGHT ...
I'M IN CHARGE OF THIS CLASS TODAY.
MY NAME'S SHOSUKE HIRATSUKA. NICE TO MEET YOU.
YUCK!

GET OVER HERE!!


HO, BOY.
WHAT'S WRONG?
SHE'S A GOD-DESS...
B-DMP
B-DMP

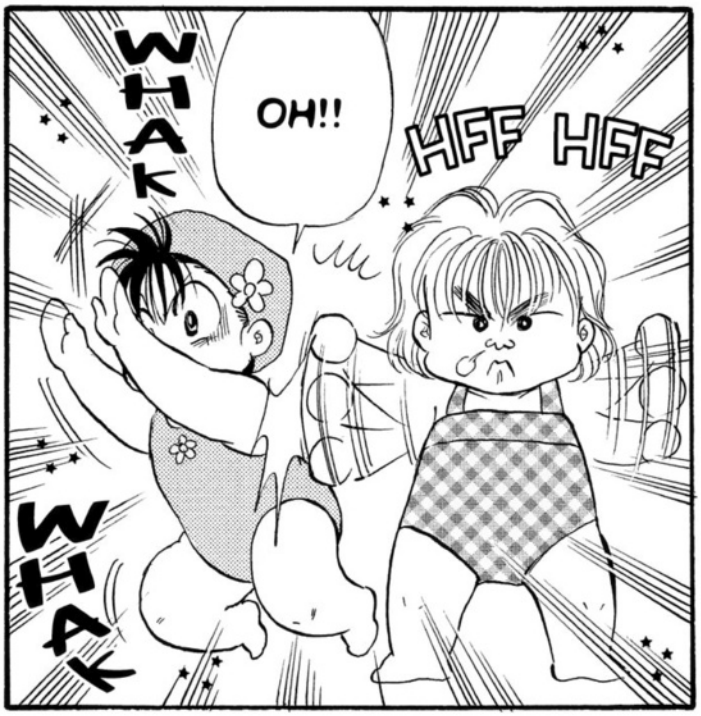
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO!!
!!
MEE-
MEE-
MEE-
MEE-
MEE


HELLO.
J-JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE.
...

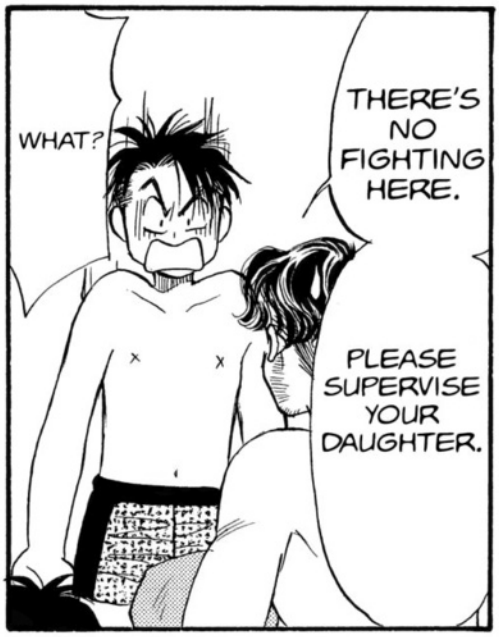
THIS IS ICHIKA.

OKAY ...
SHAKE YOUR WRISTS AND ANKLES.

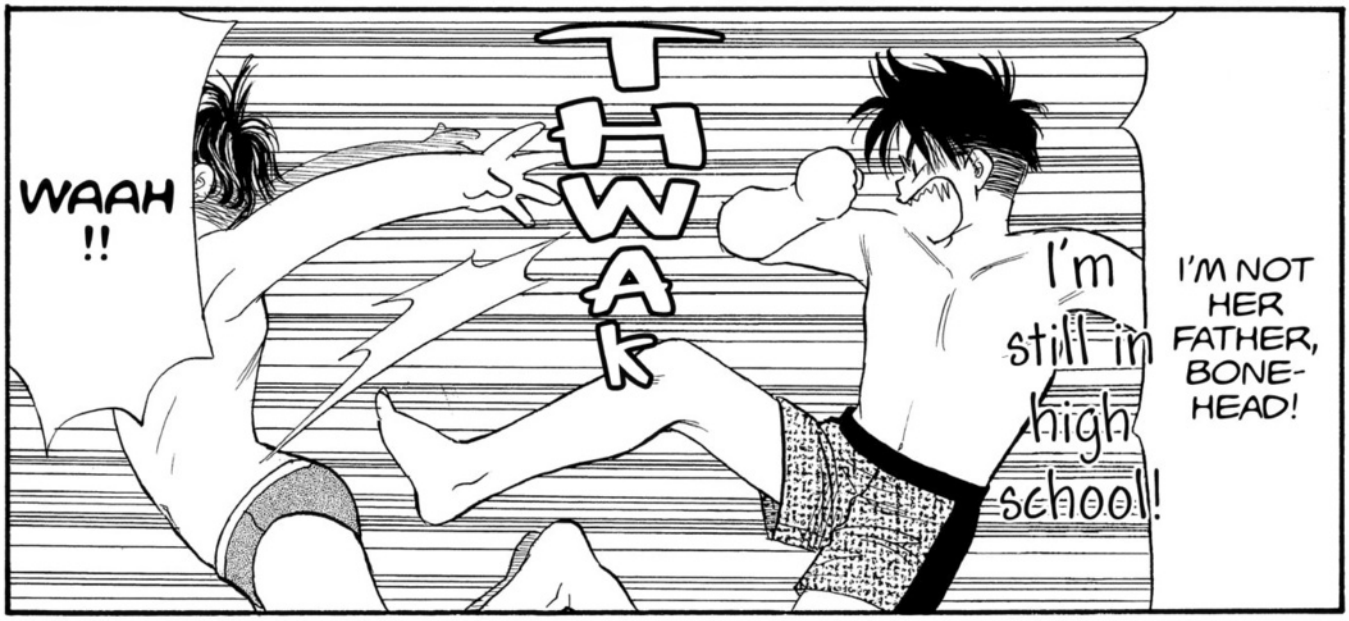
WHAT'S HE DOING?
THAT FOOL.

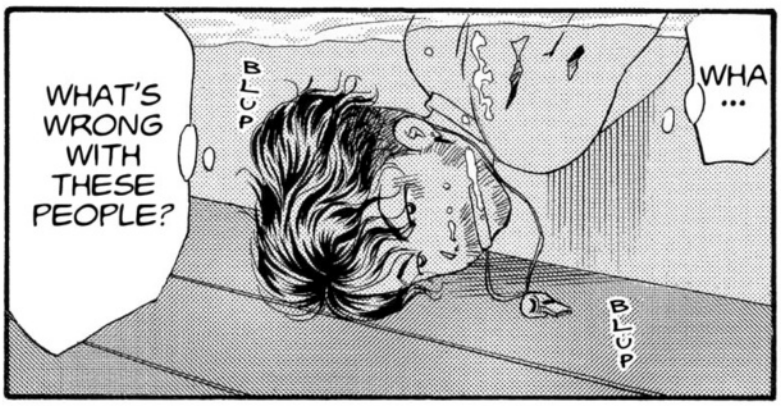

WHAK
OH!!
HFF HFF
WHAK

WHUP
NOW LOOSEN UP THOSE SHOULDERS.
WHUP

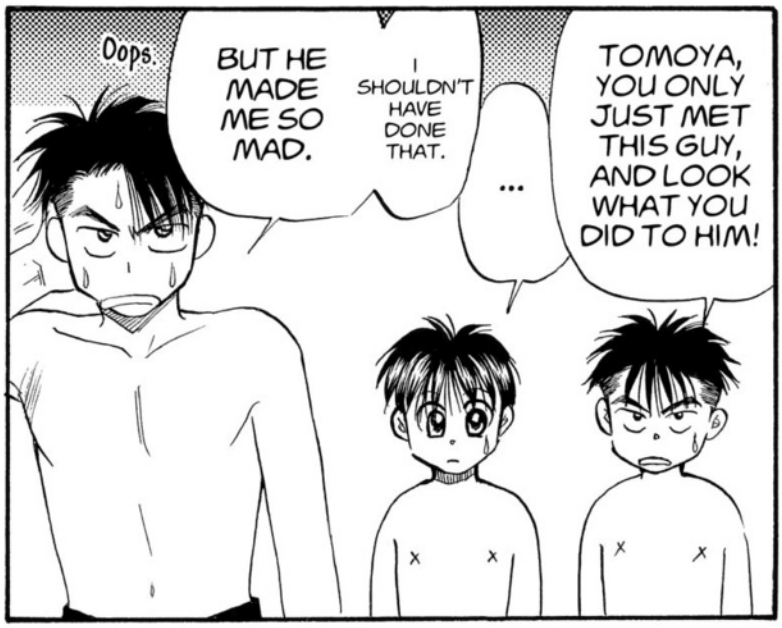

WHAT?
THERE'S NO FIGHTING HERE.
PLEASE SUPERVISE YOUR DAUGHTER.

STOP THAT !!
WHAM
GRR
GRARR
WHAM

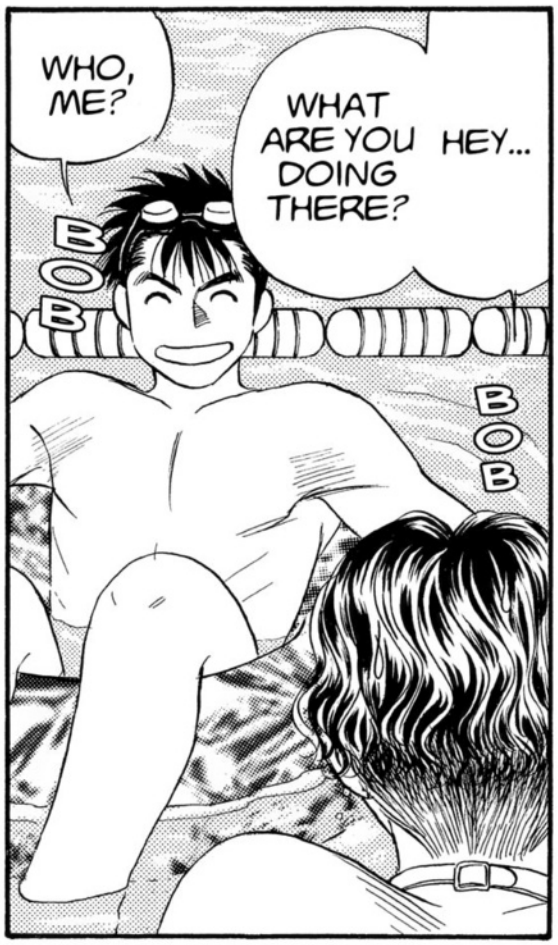

WAAH !!
THWAK
I'm still in high school!
I'M NOT HER FATHER, BONE-HEAD!


WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE?
BLUP
WHA...
BLUP

SPLASH
KONK


Oops.
BUT HE MADE ME SO MAD.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.
...
TOMOYA, YOU ONLY JUST MET THIS GUY, AND LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO HIM!

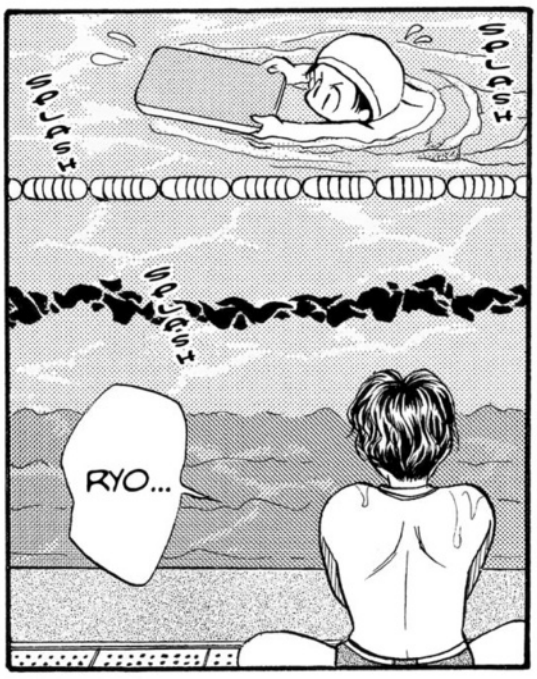
I'M NOT AN ATTEN-DANT. I'M JUST HERE TO HAVE FUN.
DON'T MIND ME.
OKAY!


WHO, ME?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?
HEY...
BOB
BOB

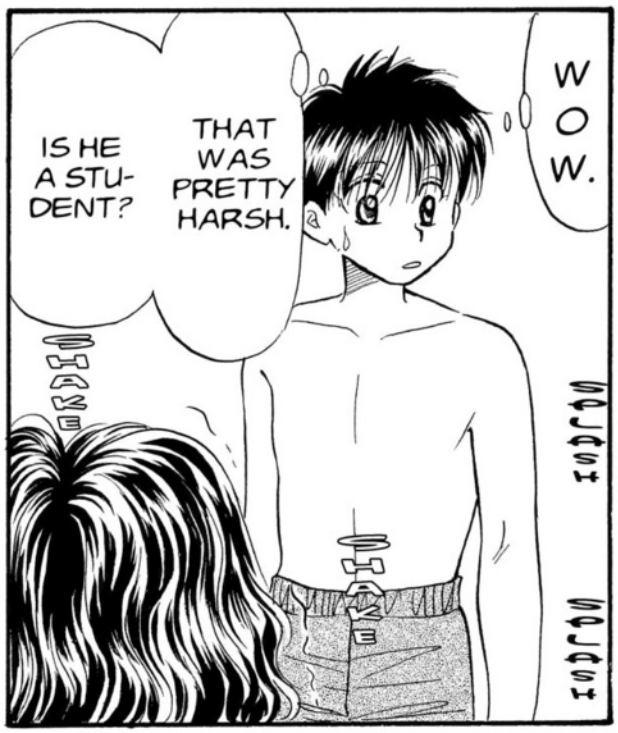
YOU OKAY, COACH?
HUH?
BOB
BOB

IF YOU'RE NOT AN ATTENDANT, GET OUT OF HERE!!
SPLASH
SPLASH
NO...
...WAY!

NUTS.
!!

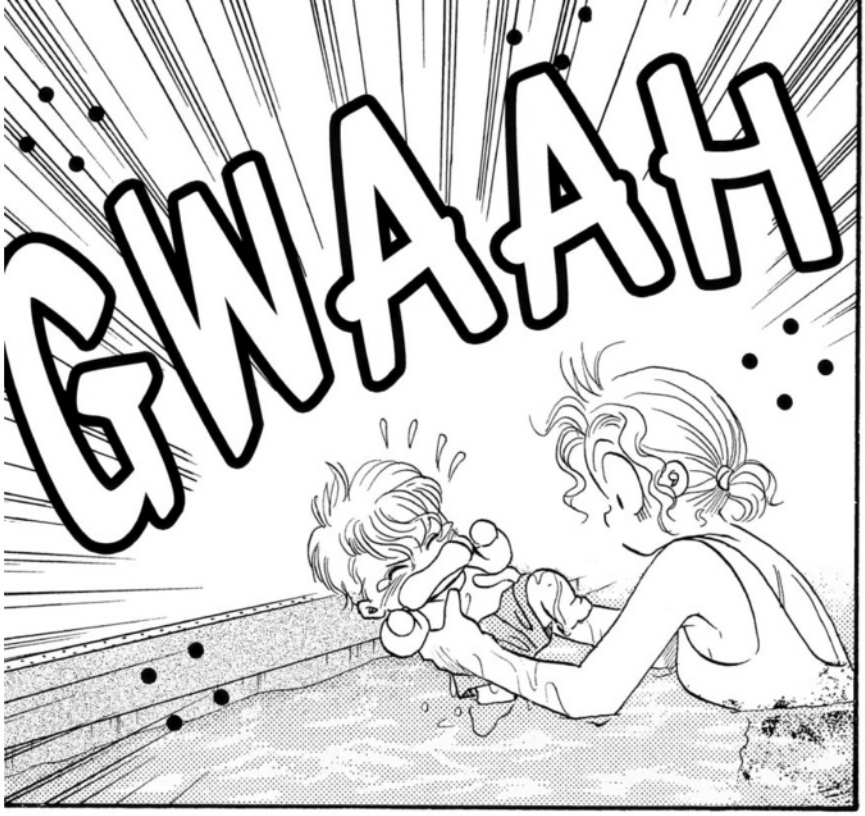

SQUASH
SQUASH
SQUASH
RYO...

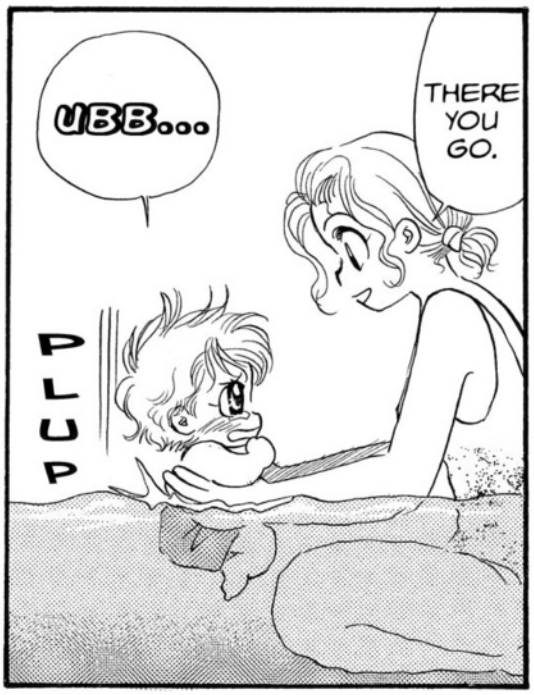
HOW EMBARRASSING! YOU'RE SO STUPID.


WOW.
THAT WAS PRETTY HARSH.
IS HE A STUDENT?
SQUASH
SQUASH
SHAKE
SHAKE

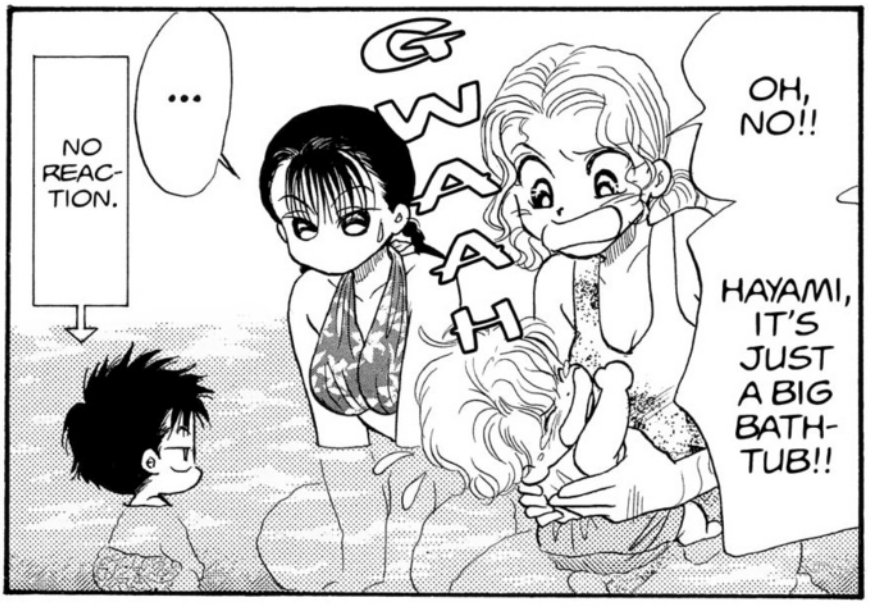
ALL RIGHT...
WAH
WAH
WAH
POUR SOME WATER ON YOUR SKIN TO HELP YOURSELF ADJUST TO THE TEMPERATURE, THEN SLIP INTO THE WATER SLOWLY.
DON'T JUMP IN.
THROB
THROB
HERE, MINORU.
DON'T BE SCARED. THE WATER'S NOT DEEP HERE.
UBB ...
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF THE OCEAN...
...AND A SWIMMING POOL IS SAFER THAN THAT.
UBB ...

WHOA!
WHOA!
HUH?
KUMPS
PLOOSH
AH!!
PLOOSH
BWAZA!
HE'S GONE STIFF.
GASP
GASP
LET'S GIVE IT A TRY, HAYAMI.
OKAY.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO JUMP IN!
BLUMP
BLUMP
BWAZA!!


GWAAH


UBB...
THERE YOU GO.
PLUP

I'M SO SORRY.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
WAH!
WAH!


NO REAC-TION.
...
GWAAH
OH, NO!!
HAYAMI, IT'S JUST A BIG BATH-TUB!!

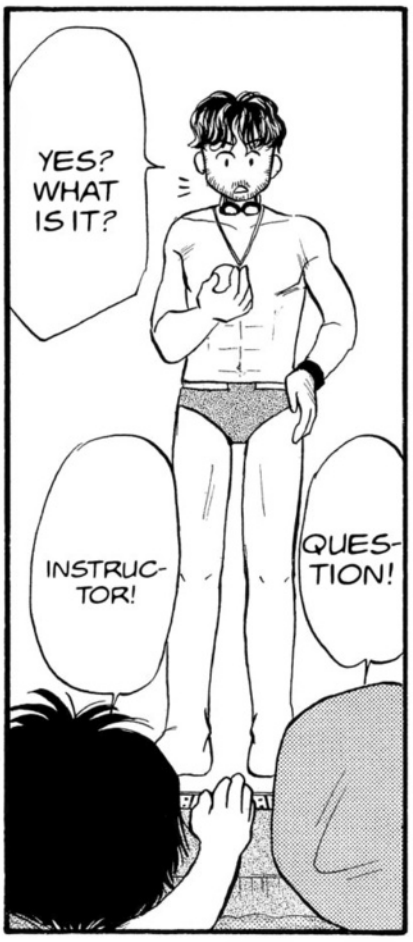
HE SEEMS TO LIKE THE WATER, RIGHT?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.

N-NO.
TRY IT MORE GRADU-ALLY.
UNH!
POUR A LITTLE WATER ON HIS BACK FIRST. DOES HE ACT LIKE THIS WHEN YOU GIVE HIM A BATH?

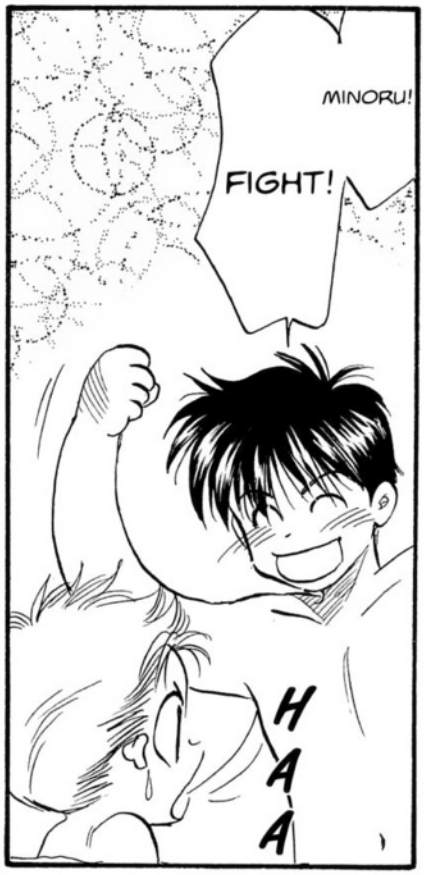
GASP!
PLOP
H-HOW WAS IT?
YOU KEPT YOUR TOES POINTED AND EVERY-THING.
GREAT!
SPLASH
SWIP
SPLOUTS
OH.
SPLASH
SWOOSH
SPLASH
PLUP

TADAAH
SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING!
OH!
DID YOU COME HERE JUST TO GOOF OFF?
THIS GUY'S GOT NO SENSE OF HUMOR.
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
HMPH.

I WANNA PICK UP A BUBBLE FIVE TOY!
AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE PICKING UP ANY TOYS UNLESS THEY'RE RICO DOLLS.
JUST DO IT.

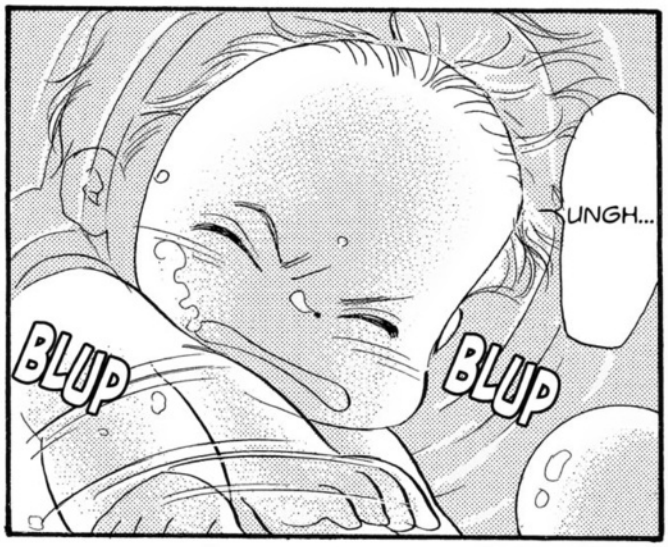

YES? WHAT IS IT?
INSTRUCTOR!
QUESTION!

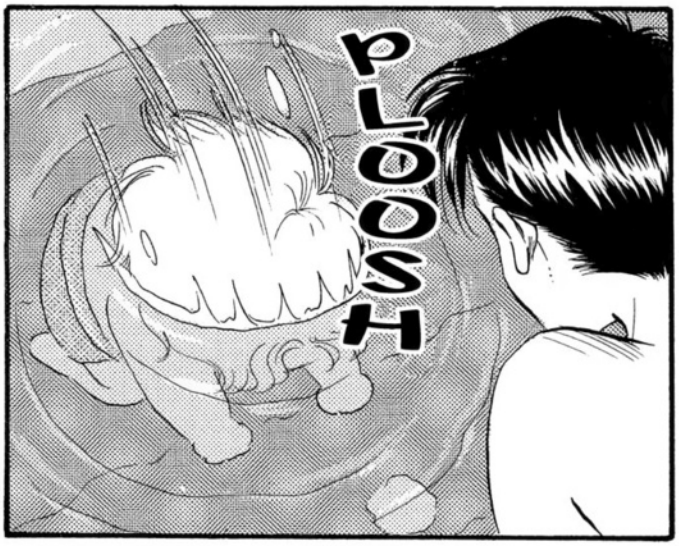
NOW LET'S PRACTICE PUTTING OUR FACES IN THE WATER.
GEEZ ...
WE'LL DO THIS BY PICKING UP TOYS OFF THE BOTTOM OF THE POOL.

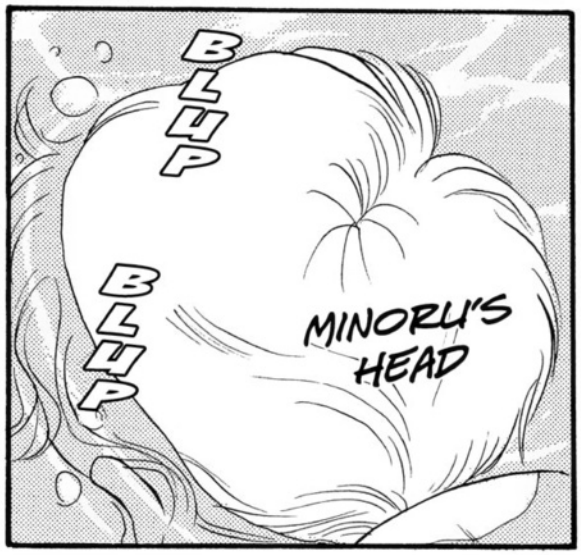

MINORU!
FIGHT!
HAA

BLUMP
WOOSH
KLUNK

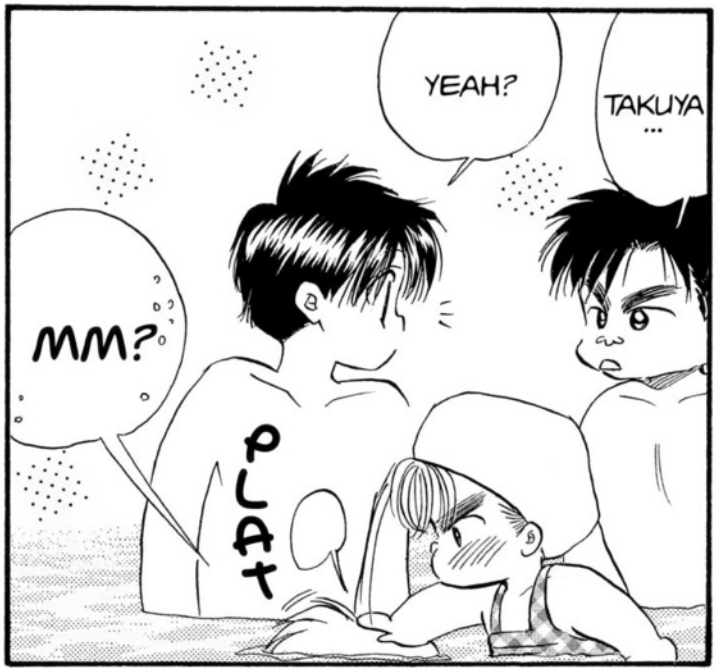
C'MON, MINORU.
SERIOUS
OKAY!


UNGH...
BLUP
BLUP

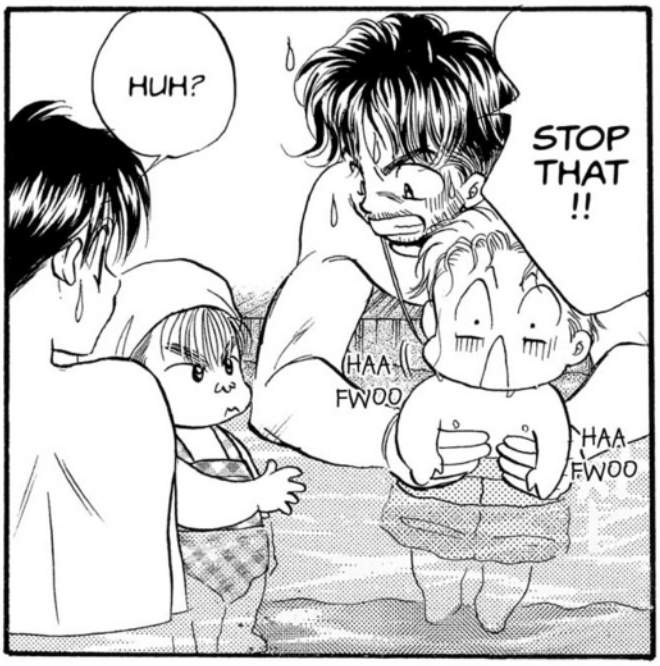

PLOOSH


BLUP
BLUP
MINORU'S HEAD

...
GLARE
GRRR...
BLUP
BLUP

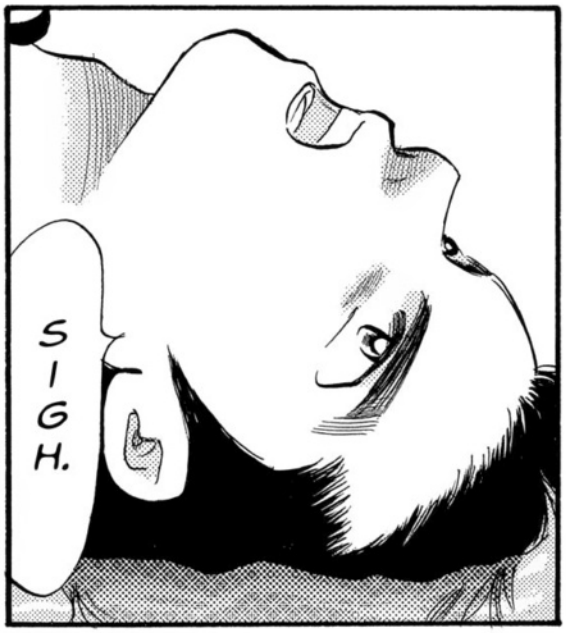

YEAH?
TAKUYA ...
MM?
PLAT

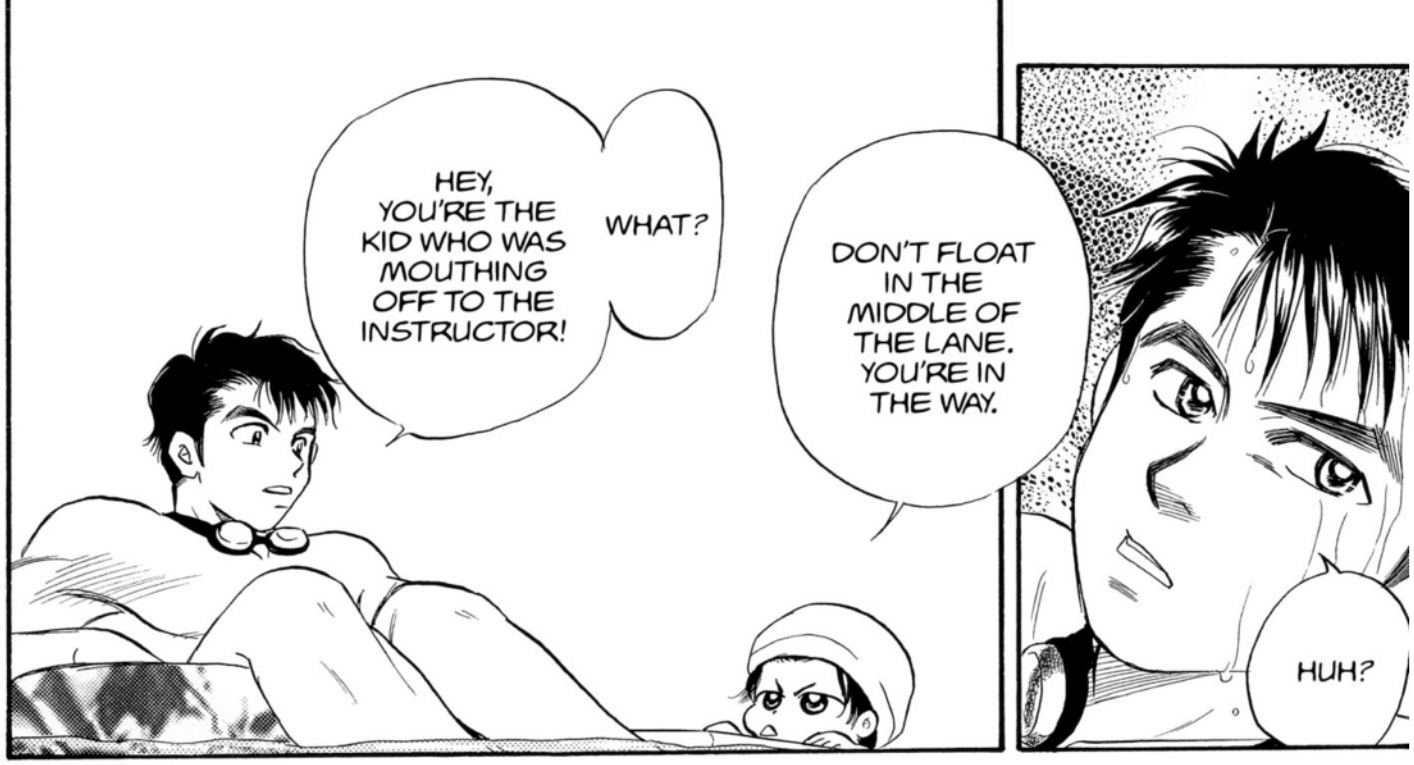
BLUSH


HUH?
STOP THAT !!
HAA-FWOO
HAA-FWOO

...DURING THE BREAK...
PLAT
PLAT
OKAY.

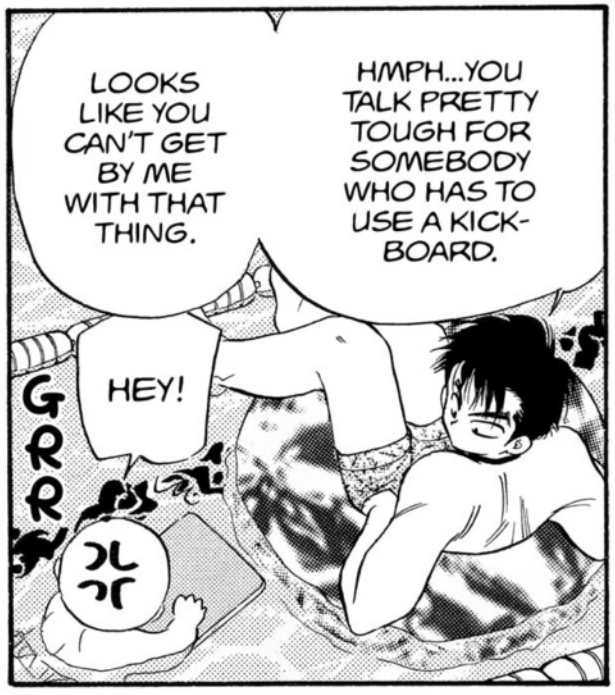
I'M TIRED OF PLAYING BY MYSELF.
HEY.


SIGH.

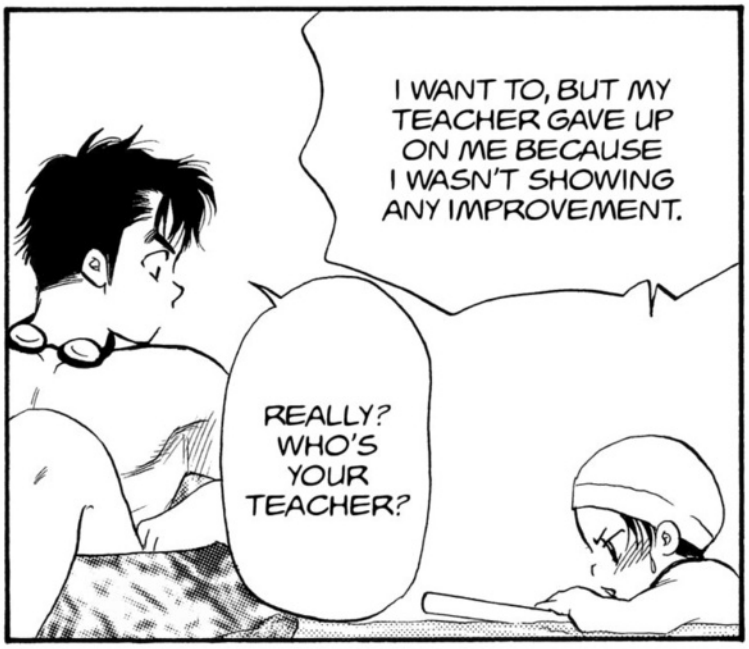

HEY, YOU'RE THE KID WHO WAS MOUTHING OFF TO THE INSTRUCTOR!
WHAT?
DON'T FLOAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LANE. YOU'RE IN THE WAY.
HUH?

AREN'T YOU TAKING LESSONS?

...
ANYWAY, SHUT UP! I'LL BE ABLE TO SWIM SOON!!

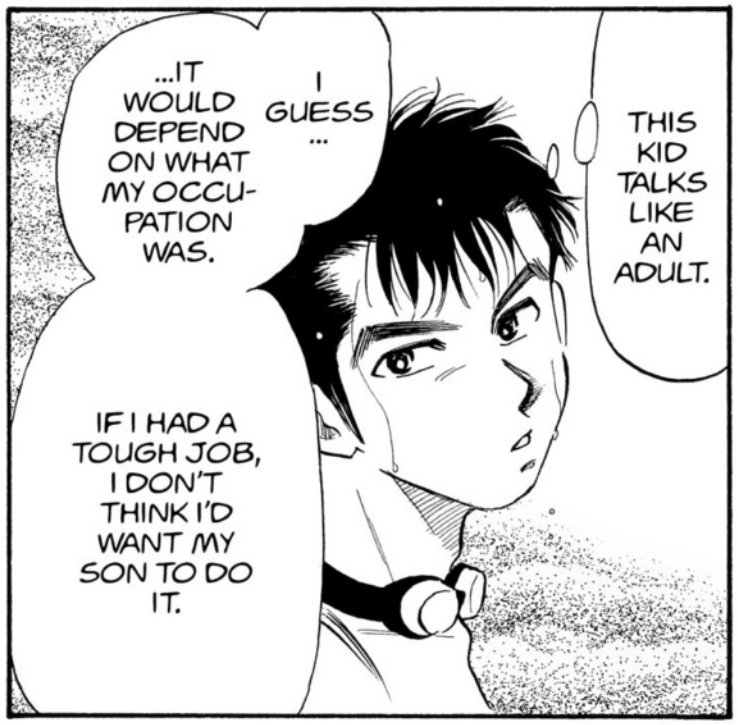

LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN'T GET BY ME WITH THAT THING.
HMPH...YOU TALK PRETTY TOUGH FOR SOMEBODY WHO HAS TO USE A KICK-BOARD.
HEY!
GRR
가가

MY DAD.

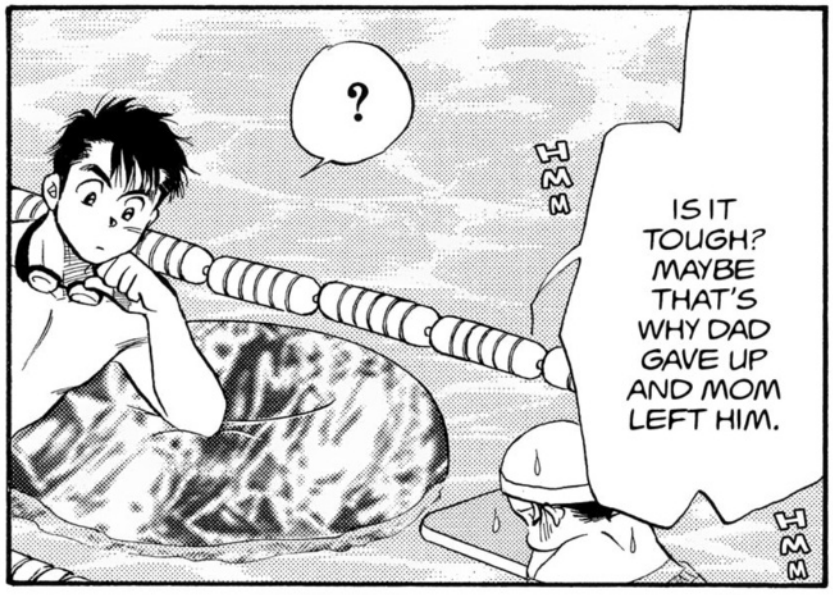

I WANT TO, BUT MY TEACHER GAVE UP ON ME BECAUSE I WASN'T SHOWING ANY IMPROVEMENT.
REALLY? WHO'S YOUR TEACHER?

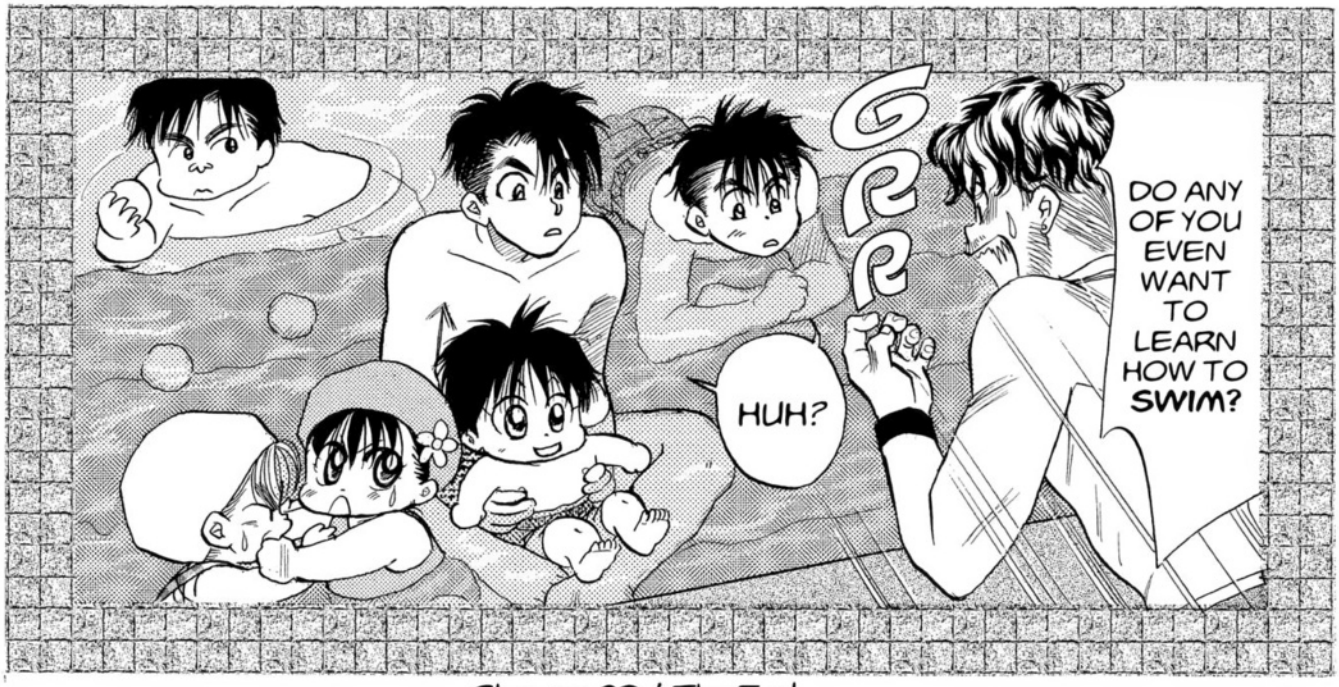
DO YOU HAVE ANY KIDS?
YEAH, A SON.

HEY, CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
SURE.
SHOOF


THIS KID TALKS LIKE AN ADULT.
I GUESS ...
...IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT MY OCCU-PATION WAS.
IF I HAD A TOUGH JOB, I DON'T THINK I'D WANT MY SON TO DO IT.

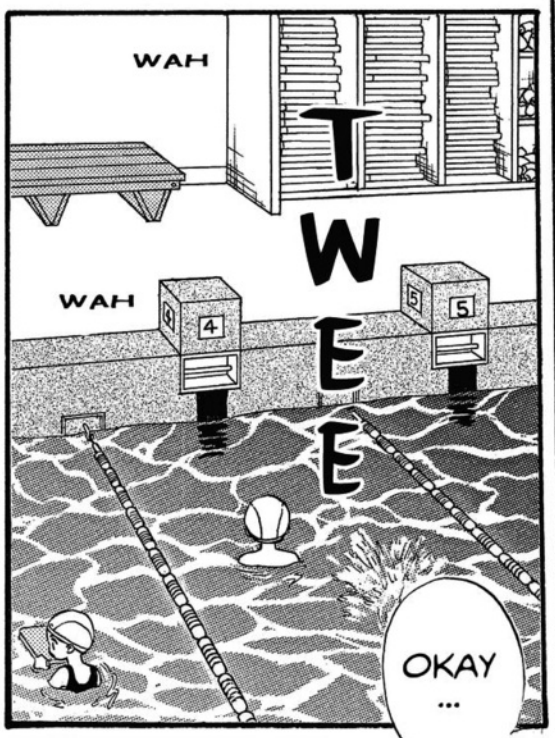
WOULDN'T YOU WANT YOUR SON TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOT-STEPS WHEN HE GROWS UP?


IS IT TOUGH? MAYBE THAT'S WHY DAD GAVE UP AND MOM LEFT HIM.
HMM
?
HMM



Chapter 82 / The End

JAPAN
BABY & Me
Chapter 83


WAH
WAH
TWEE
OKAY ...

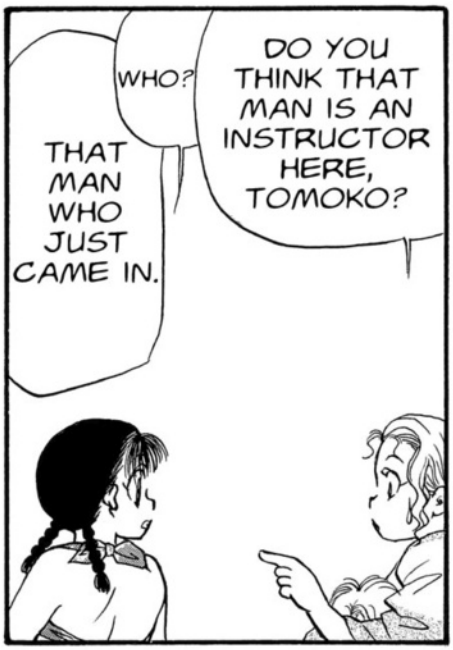
WE'RE TAKING A ONE-DAY TRIAL CLASS AT A SWIMMING CLUB.
(TAKUYA)
GREEN SWIMMING

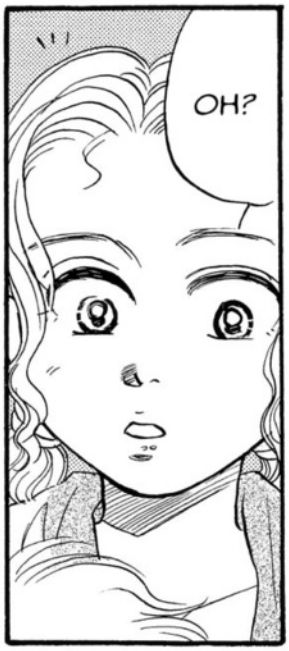
WE'LL TAKE A 15-MINUTE BREAK. REST YOURSELVES.

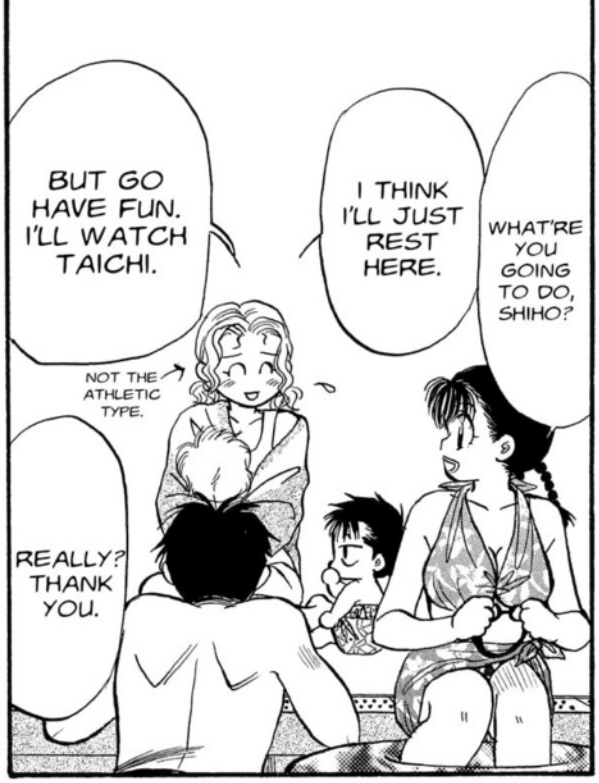
HUH?
SEIICHI! LET ME USE YOUR RING AND GOGGLES. ♡
SWIM OVER HERE, THEN.

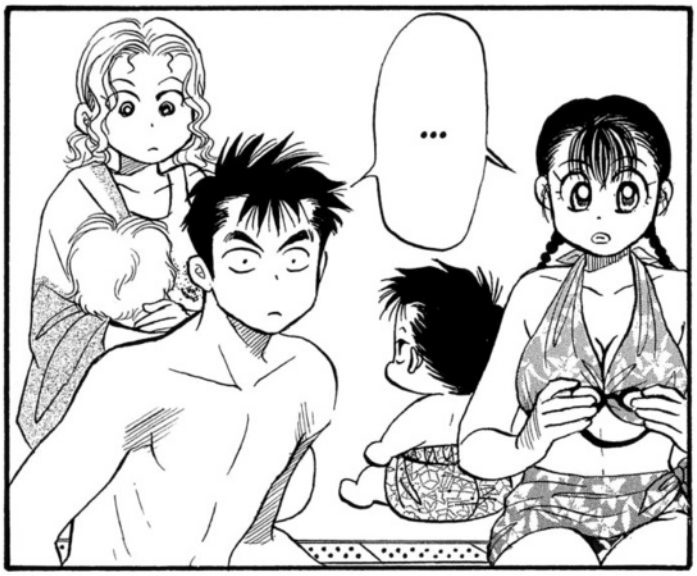
AW, GEEZ...
I'M WEARING MY CONTACT LENSES!!
I CAN'T !!
THEY'LL COME OUT!
HERE I COME.

THIS CLASS IS EXHAUSTING.
YAY
LET'S PLAY!
ALL RIGHT !
MINORU


DO YOU THINK THAT MAN IS AN INSTRUCTOR HERE, TOMOKO?
WHO?
THAT MAN WHO JUST CAME IN.


OH?


WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO, SHIHO?
I THINK I'LL JUST REST HERE.
BUT GO HAVE FUN. I'LL WATCH TAICHI.
NOT THE ATHLETIC TYPE.
REALLY? THANK YOU.

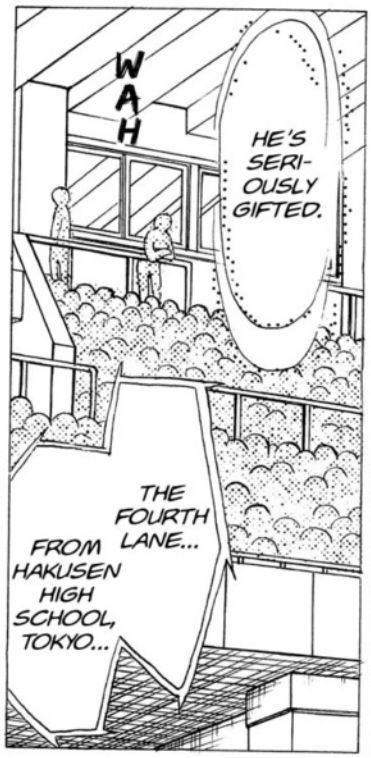

...

WHAT? THAT GUY?
TOMP
TOMP
YEAH.

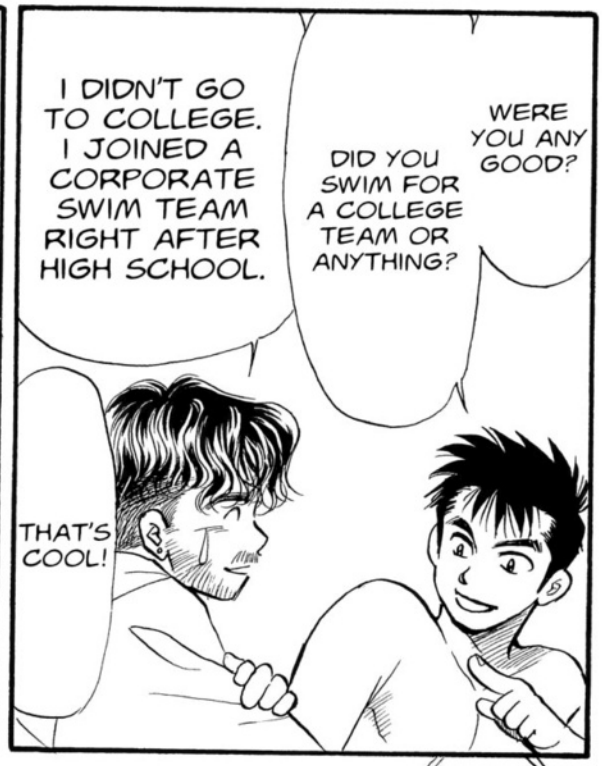
SHOSUKE! GET OVER HERE!
HEY !!
DON'T CALL ME BY MY FIRST NAME LIKE WE'RE FRIENDS!!

WHEW...
EXHAUSTED
I HOPE THERE WON'T BE TOO MANY MORE OF THESE TRIAL CLASSES.
HEY!!

THAT'S MR. RAIMON. THEY SAY HE SWAM IN THE NATIONALS ...
...AS A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.
YEAH.
IS THAT GUY AN INSTRUCTOR TOO?
WHAT A DRAG.
HMPH...
YEAH, ME TOO.
UMM... I THOUGHT SWIMMING WAS GOOD FOR LOSING WEIGHT.
HUH?
SORRY, READERS.
WERE YOU ON A SWIMMING TEAM WHEN YOU WERE IN SCHOOL?
YOU HAVE A GOOD BUILD, SHOSUKE.
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?
HEY!
IS SHABBINESS A JOB REQUIREMENT AROUND HERE?
HE'S SO HAIRY.
OH, YEAH?
HIRAT-SUKA...
HIRATSUKA'S GOT REAL POTENTIAL.
YEAH, I WAS.
BUT I STARTED SWIMMING IN HIGH SCHOOL, NOT JUNIOR HIGH.


WAH
HE'S SERIOUSLY GIFTED.
THE FOURTH LANE...
FROM HAKUSEN HIGH SCHOOL, TOKYO...

HIRATSUKA COULD GO ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP.
BUT I QUIT.
HA HA HA


I DIDN'T GO TO COLLEGE. I JOINED A CORPORATE SWIM TEAM RIGHT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.
DID YOU SWIM FOR A COLLEGE TEAM OR ANYTHING?
WERE YOU ANY GOOD?
THAT'S COOL!

WHAT...

WILL THAT GUY EVEN FIT IN THE POOL?
WHOA!!
OH

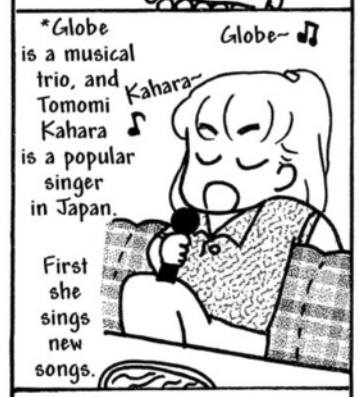
OOPS. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FORGET ALL THAT.
!!
IS THAT ONE OF THE PARENTS?

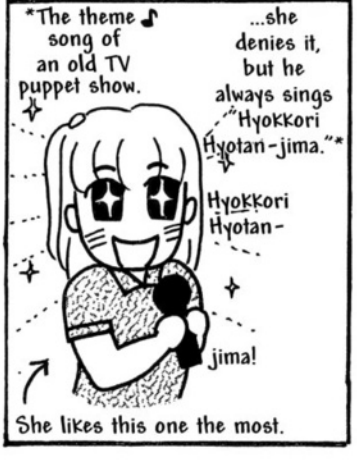
RAH
RAH
...I WAS THE CENTER OF THE WORLD.
...I FELT LIKE...
AT THAT MOMENT...
HIRATSUKA!
HOORAY

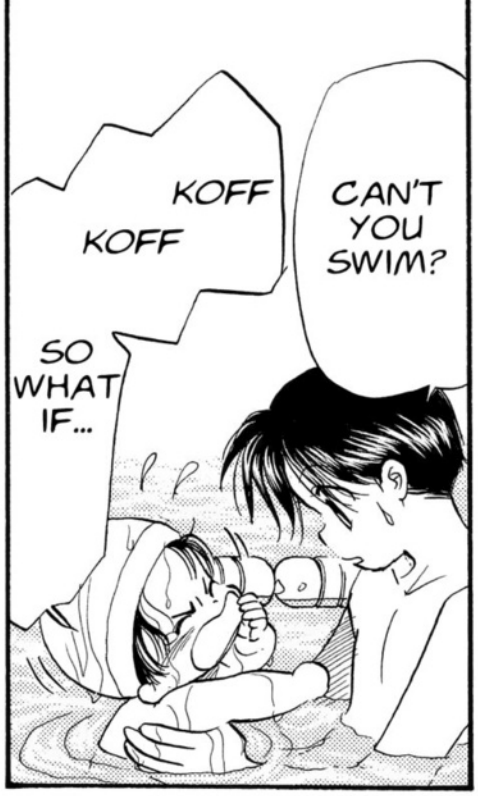
MOM!
OH.
...IS SHE DOING HERE?
SORRY.
OOF!!
BUMP
SPLASH
...AFTER WALKING OUT ON RYO AND ME!
SHE'S GOT A LOT OF NERVE COMING HERE...
SPLASH
WAH
WAH
TAKUYA! LET'S RACE!
KOFF!!
PLOOSH
SAJASI
HUH?
SAJASI
GLUP!!
WAH!!

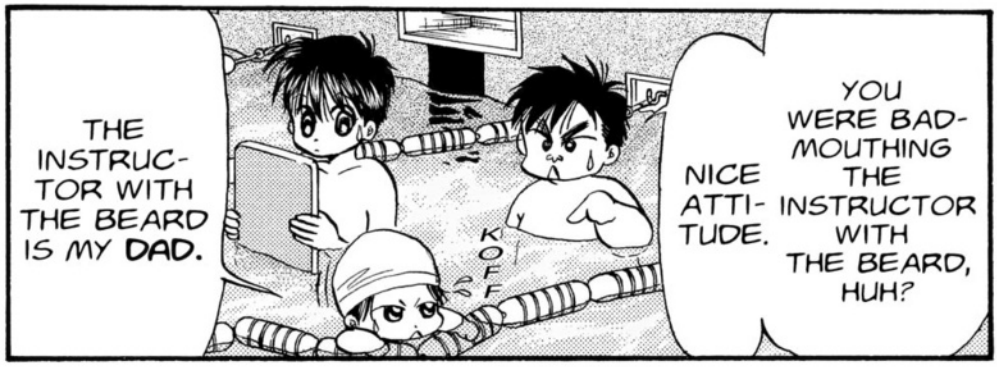
Author's Note: Part 3

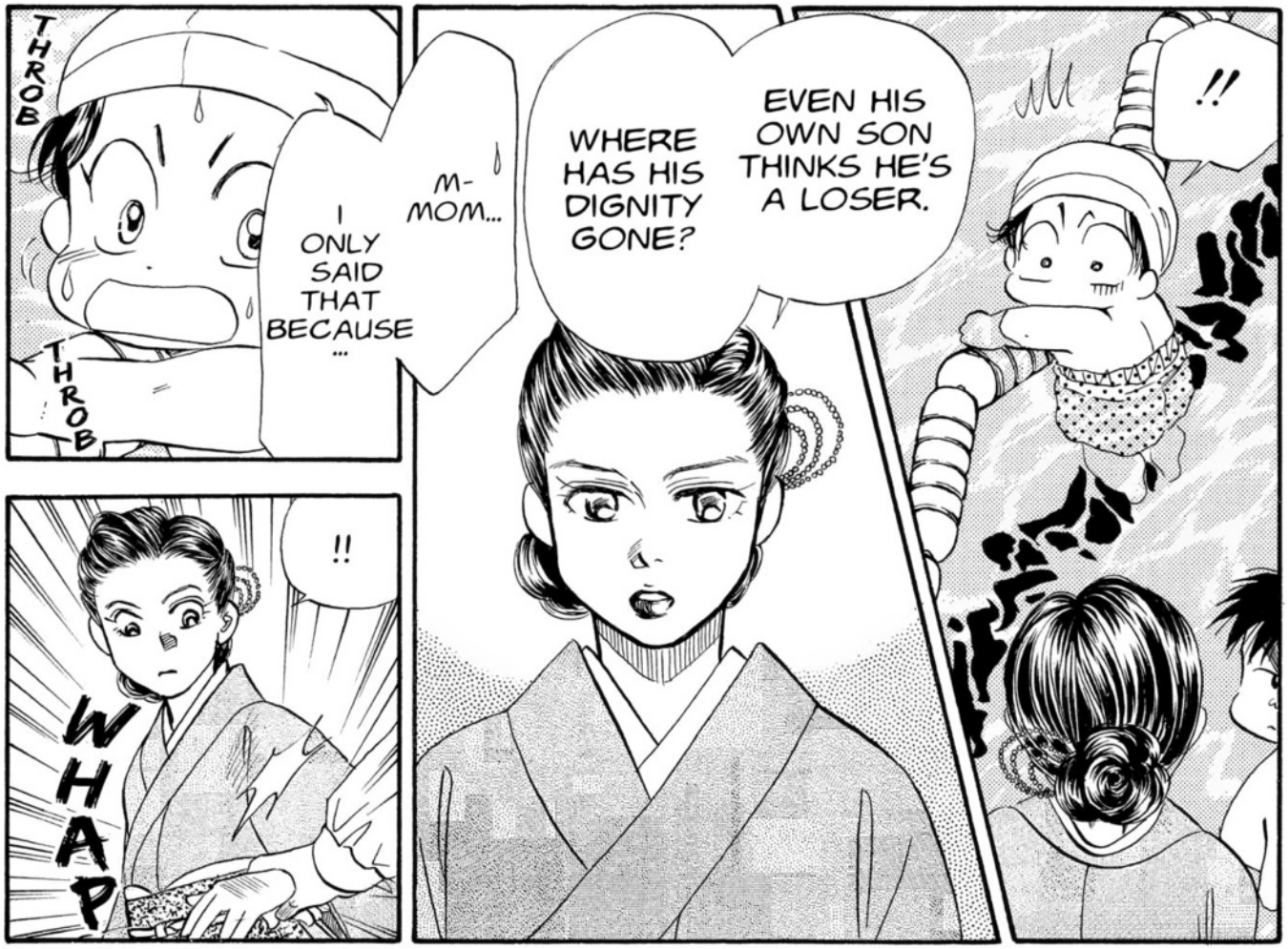
Big Sister Exposes Ragawa's Secrets No.2

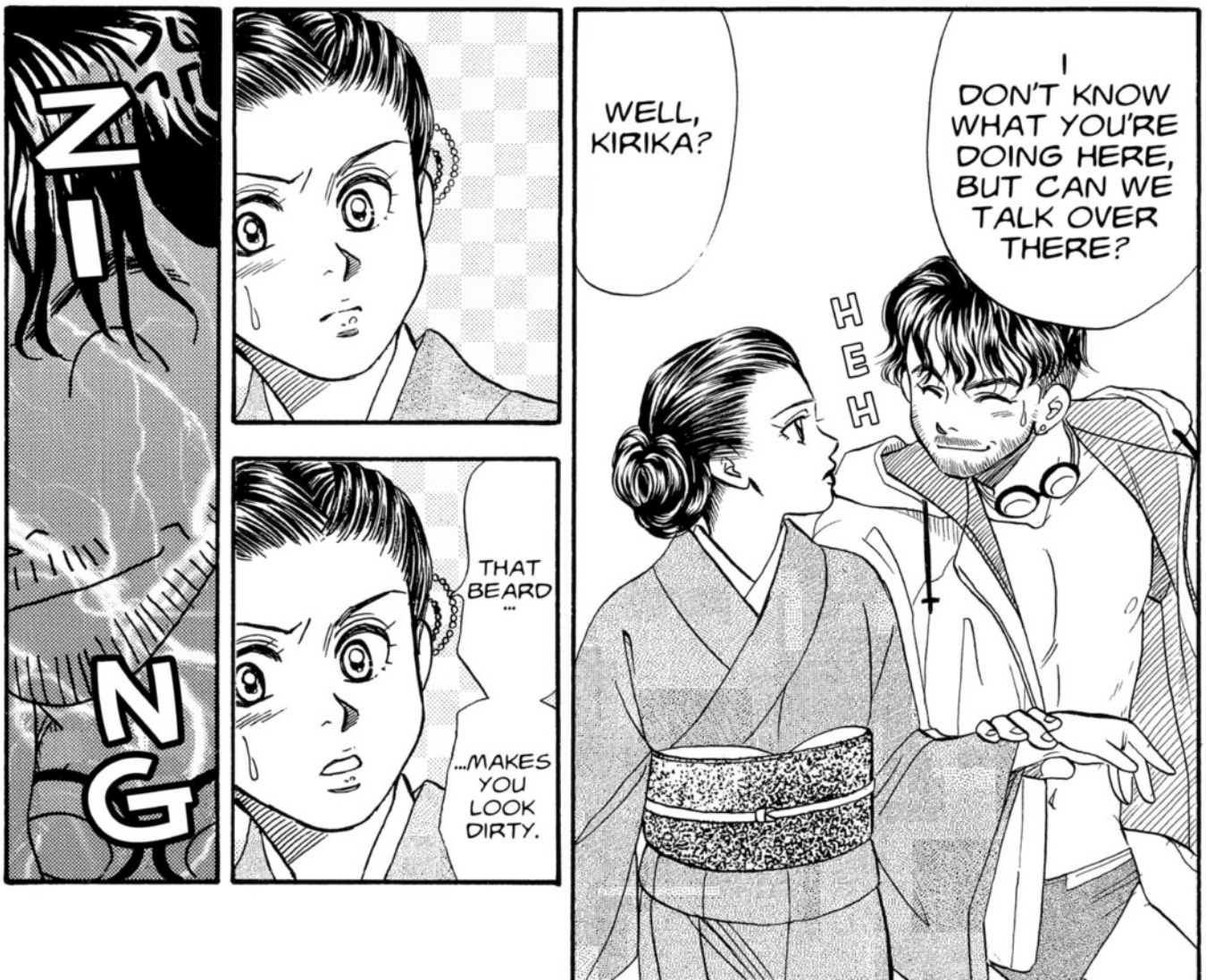


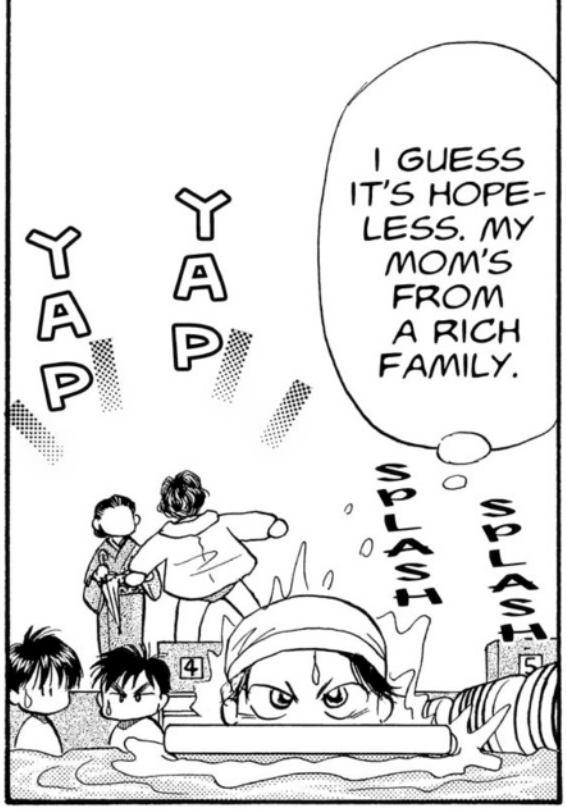


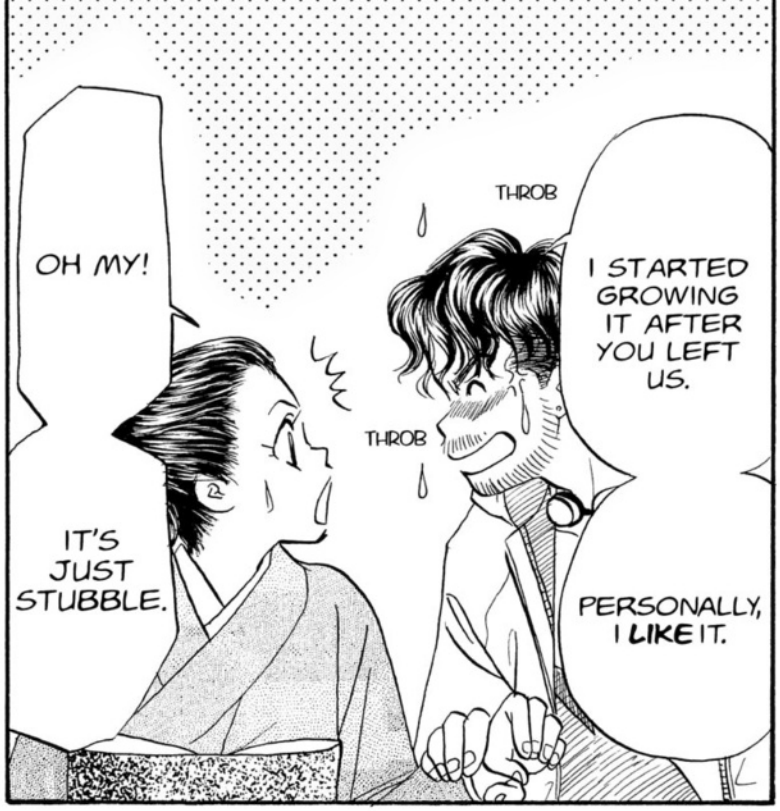




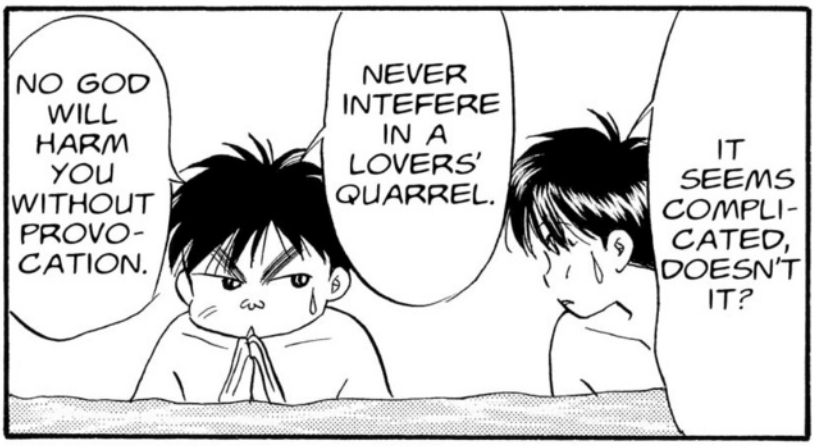

THROB
THROB
M-MOM...
I ONLY SAID THAT BECAUSE ...
WHERE HAS HIS DIGNITY GONE?
EVEN HIS OWN SON THINKS HE'S A LOSER.
!!
!!
WHAP


NI
NG
THAT BEARD ...
...MAKES YOU LOOK DIRTY.
WELL, KIRIKA?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, BUT CAN WE TALK OVER THERE?
HEH


I GUESS IT'S HOPELESS. MY MOM'S FROM A RICH FAMILY.
YAP
YAP
YAP
SPLASH
SPLASH
4
5

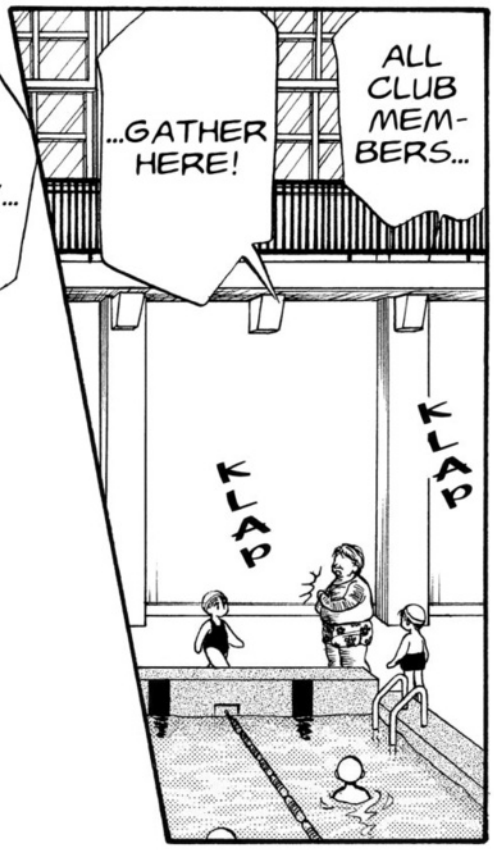

OH MY!
IT'S JUST STUBBLE.
THROB
THROB
I STARTED GROWING IT AFTER YOU LEFT US.
PERSONALLY, I LIKE IT.

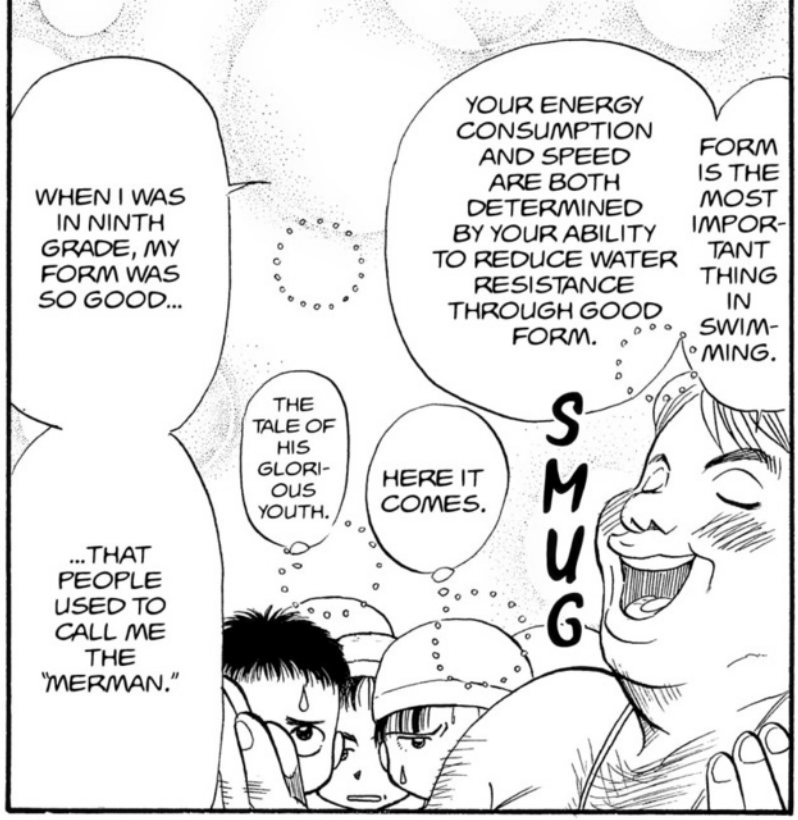
TWEE


NO GOD WILL HARM YOU WITHOUT PROVOCATION.
NEVER INTEFERE IN A LOVERS' QUARREL.
IT SEEMS COMPLICATED, DOESN'T IT?

I CAN SWIM 25 METERS.
KADOMATSU!
...

OKAY...
I WANT EACH OF YOU...
...TO GIVE ME A PROGRESS REPORT!

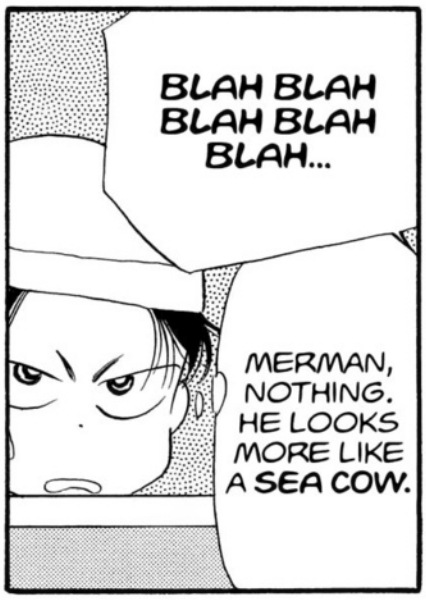

ALL CLUB MEMBERS...
...GATHER HERE!
KLAP
KLAP


WHEN I WAS IN NINTH GRADE, MY FORM WAS SO GOOD...
...THAT PEOPLE USED TO CALL ME THE "MERMAN."
THE TALE OF HIS GLORIOUS YOUTH.
HERE IT COMES.
YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND SPEED ARE BOTH DETERMINED BY YOUR ABILITY TO REDUCE WATER RESISTANCE THROUGH GOOD FORM.
FORM IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN SWIMMING.
SMUG

THAT'S GOOD.
BUT I WAS WATCHING YOU SWIM, AND YOUR BREATHING...
...AND YOUR FORM COULD USE SOME WORK.
NOD
NOD
OH YEAH?

STILL USING A KICKBOARD?
I ALREADY TAUGHT YOU HOW TO SWIM WITHOUT IT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
UMM ...

HUH?
SO, HIRATSUKA...

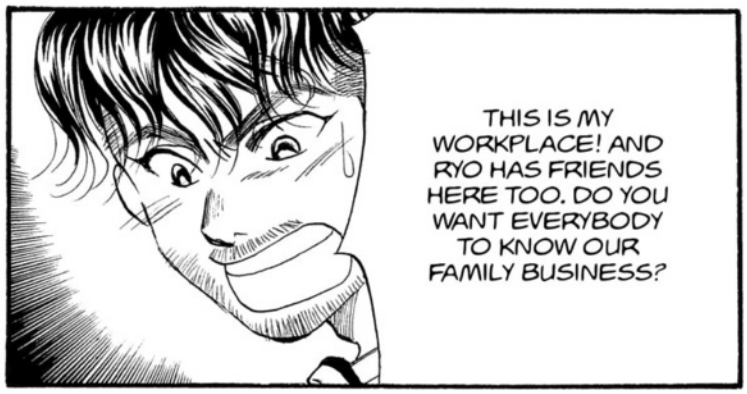

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH...
MERMAN, NOTHING. HE LOOKS MORE LIKE A SEA COW.

OKAY. IN THE SECOND HALF, YOU HOLD ONTO THE SIDE OF THE POOL AND PRACTICE KICKING AGAIN.
ZING
ZING

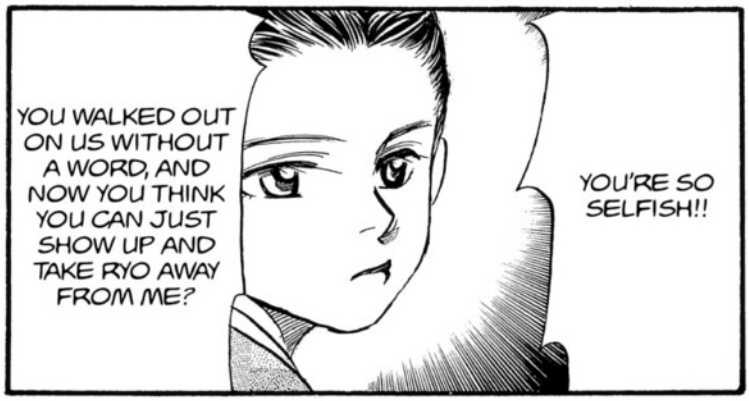
...BUT YOU'RE HOPELESS.
YOUR FATHER MAY BE A SWIMMING INSTRUCTOR ...
...

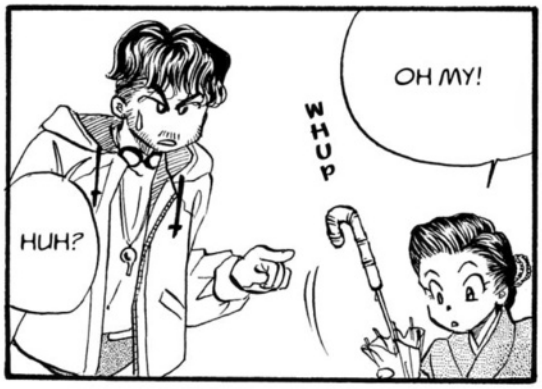
HOW MUCH OF MY PRECIOUS TIME DO I HAVE TO SPEND ON YOU?
MAYBE YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME TRYING TO LEARN TO SWIM.

SPLASH
SPLASH
RAH
TAKUYA!
WANNA DO A 25-METER RACE?
OKAY. FREE-STYLE?
ACTU-ALLY...
I'VE NEVER SWUM AGAINST FUJII BEFORE.
WE'RE ON THE SAME TEAM AT SCHOOL.
ANY STYLE YOU WANT.
SMILE
WE'D NEVER HAVE EMPTY LANES TO SWIM IN...
...AT A PUBLIC POOL, YOU KNOW.
ME, TOO!
COUNT ME IN!
I CAN DO THE BREASTSTROKE, BUT I START TO SINK AFTER A WHILE.
I CAN ONLY SWIM ABOUT THREE METERS, BUT COUNT ME IN TOO.
AND YOU WANT TO RACE ME?
GOTOH, IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU CAN'T SWIM.
RAH
WHY...
...DID YOU COME HERE?
JACK
JACK
DON'T YOU KNOW?
I'VE COME TO GET RYO.


THIS IS MY WORKPLACE! AND RYO HAS FRIENDS HERE TOO. DO YOU WANT EVERYBODY TO KNOW OUR FAMILY BUSINESS?

YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM!
SINCE YOU WON'T LET ME SEE OR TALK TO RYO...
...I HAD TO COME HERE.


YOU'RE SO SELFISH!!
YOU WALKED OUT ON US WITHOUT A WORD, AND NOW YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST SHOW UP AND TAKE RYO AWAY FROM ME?

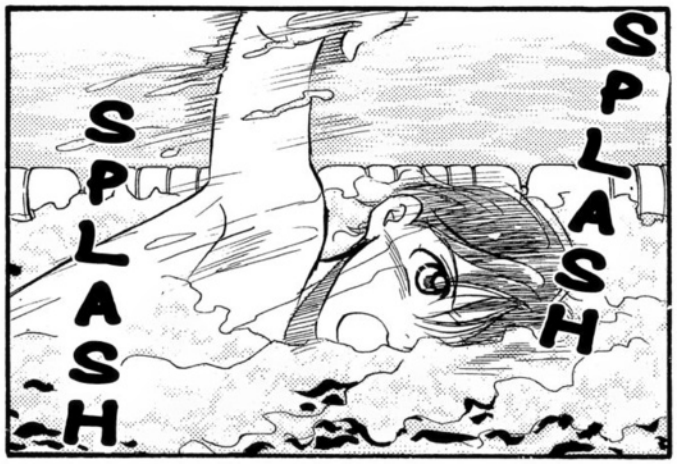

OH MY!
WHUP
HUH?

YOU RICH GIRLS REALLY THINK YOU CAN HAVE EVERY-THING YOUR OWN WAY!
I SUPPOSE YOU LEFT ME...
...BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T STAND TO LIVE WITH A LOSER LIKE ME!

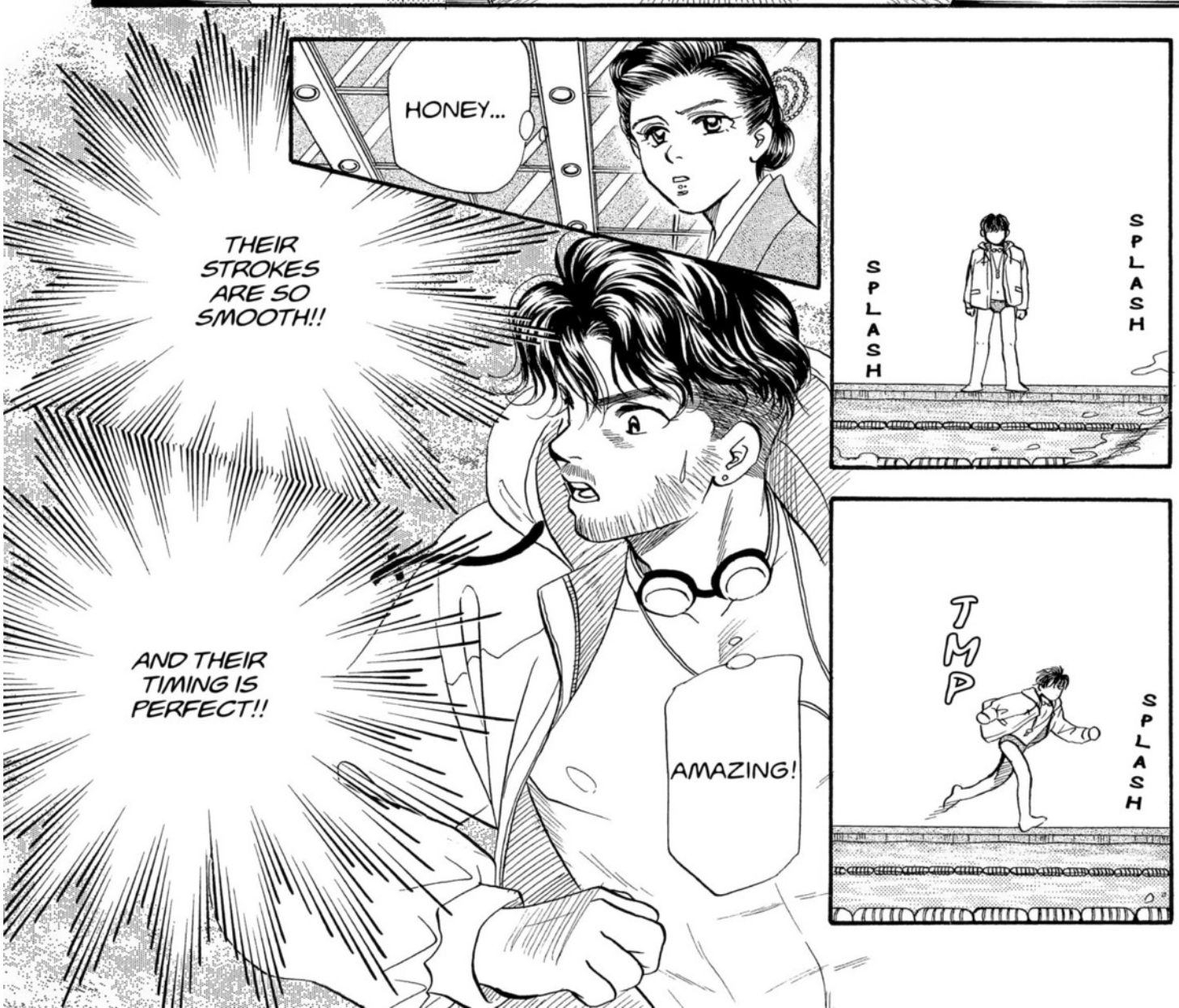
OUCH!
WHAK
CALM DOWN.
THERE.

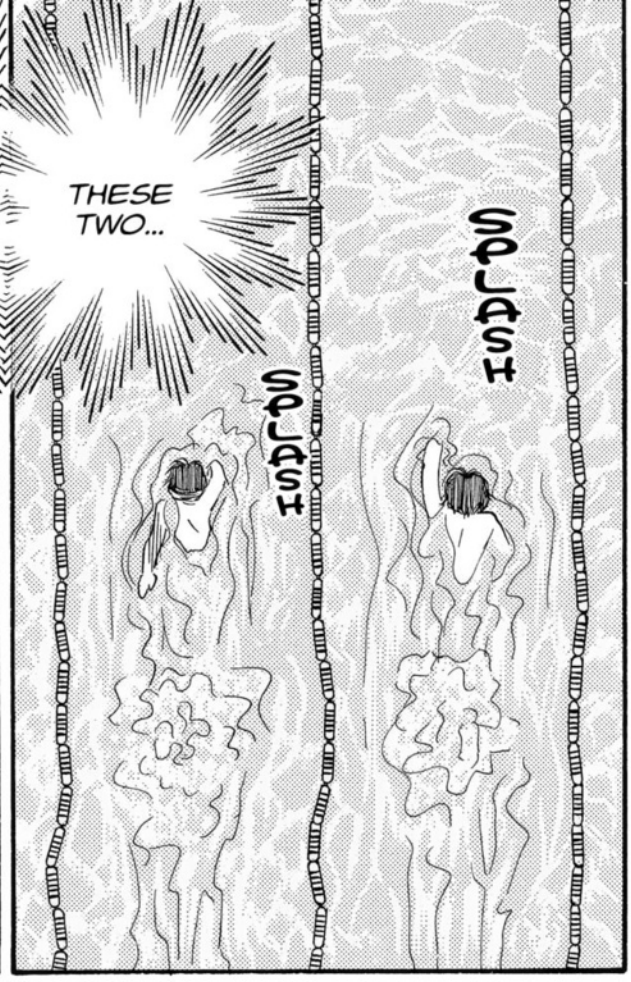
YOU'RE SO LOUD.
MY GOOD-NESS.
That was a dirty trick!!
WHAT THE...?

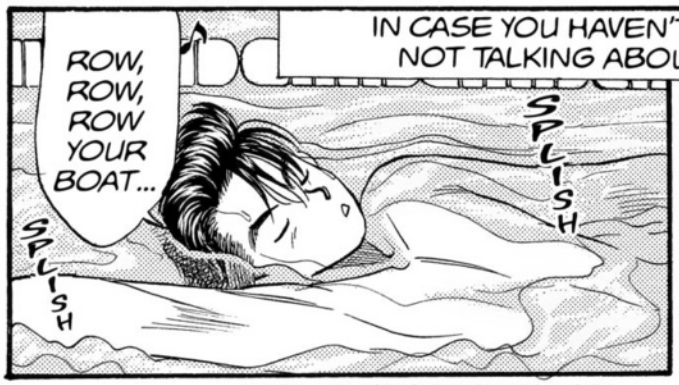
WOULD YOU CALL THE STUDENTS BACK?
KIRIKA, WE CAN TALK WHEN I'M DONE HERE.
WSP WSP
UH?
...BREAK'S OVER. LET'S GET BACK TO WORK.
OKAY ...
THROB THROB
GO ON.
...
YOU JUST TOLD EVERYBODY ...
STARE
...OUR FAMILY PROBLEMS.
THEY'RE ALL HERE, BUT THEY'RE ASLEEP.
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
BONG
SPLASH
...IS SHATTERED.
KERSPLASH
SWAY
SWAY
MY DIGNITY AS AN INSTRUCTOR ...


SPLASH
SPLASH

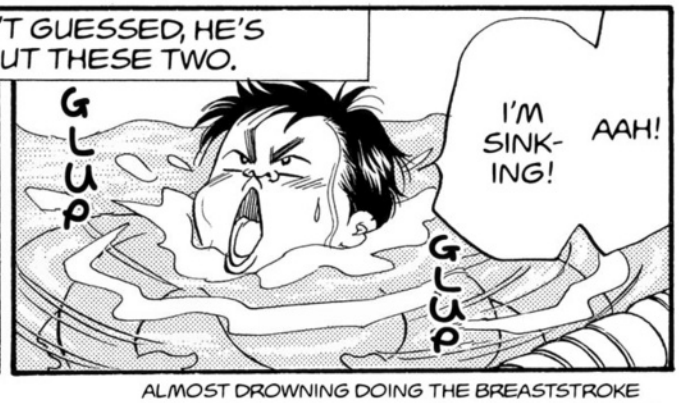
SPLASH


HONEY...
THEIR STROKES ARE SO SMOOTH!!
AND THEIR TIMING IS PERFECT!!
AMAZING!
SPLASH
SPLASH
TMP
SPLASH

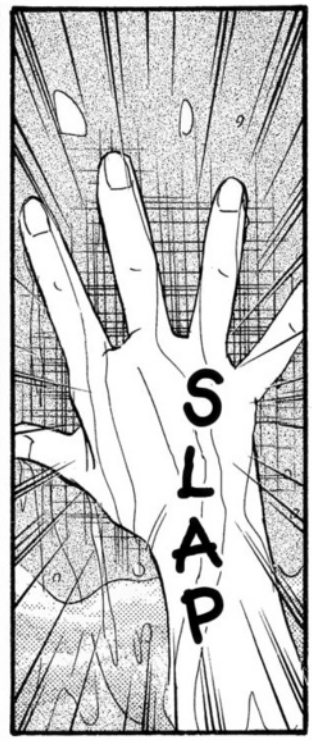


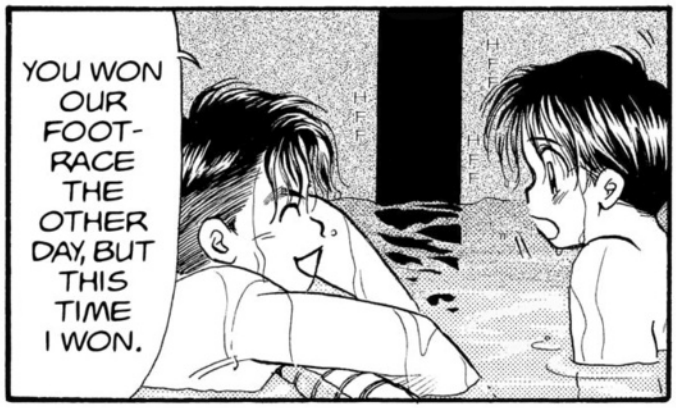


LEISURELY DOING THE BACKSTROKE

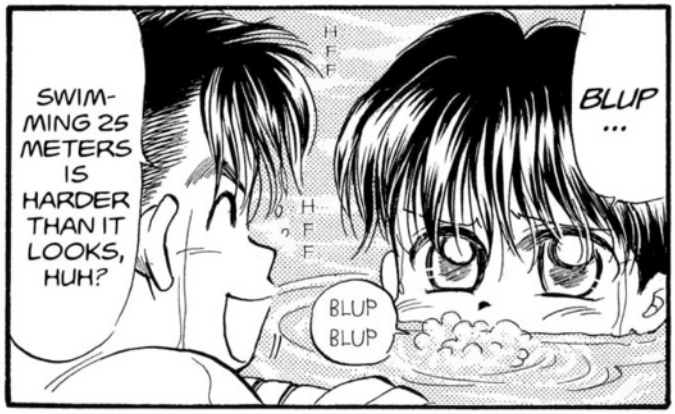


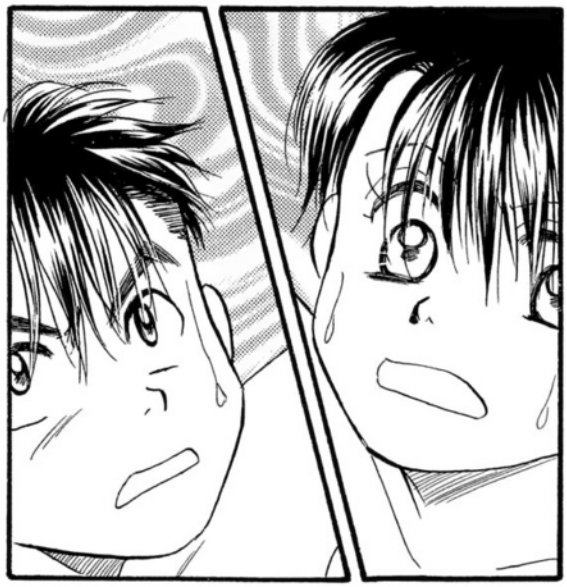
ALMOST DROWNING DOING THE BREASTSTROKE

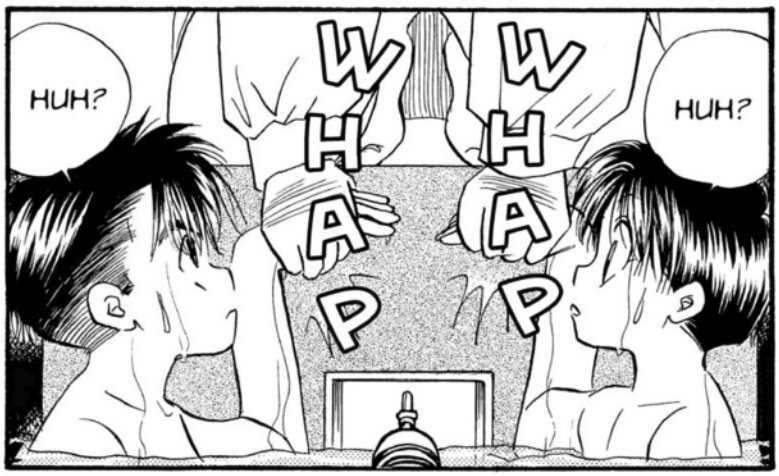



YOU WON OUR FOOT-RACE THE OTHER DAY, BUT THIS TIME I WON.
HFF
HFF

BUT ONLY BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.


SWIM-MING 25 METERS IS HARDER THAN IT LOOKS, HUH?
BLUP ...
HFF
HFF
BLUP BLUP



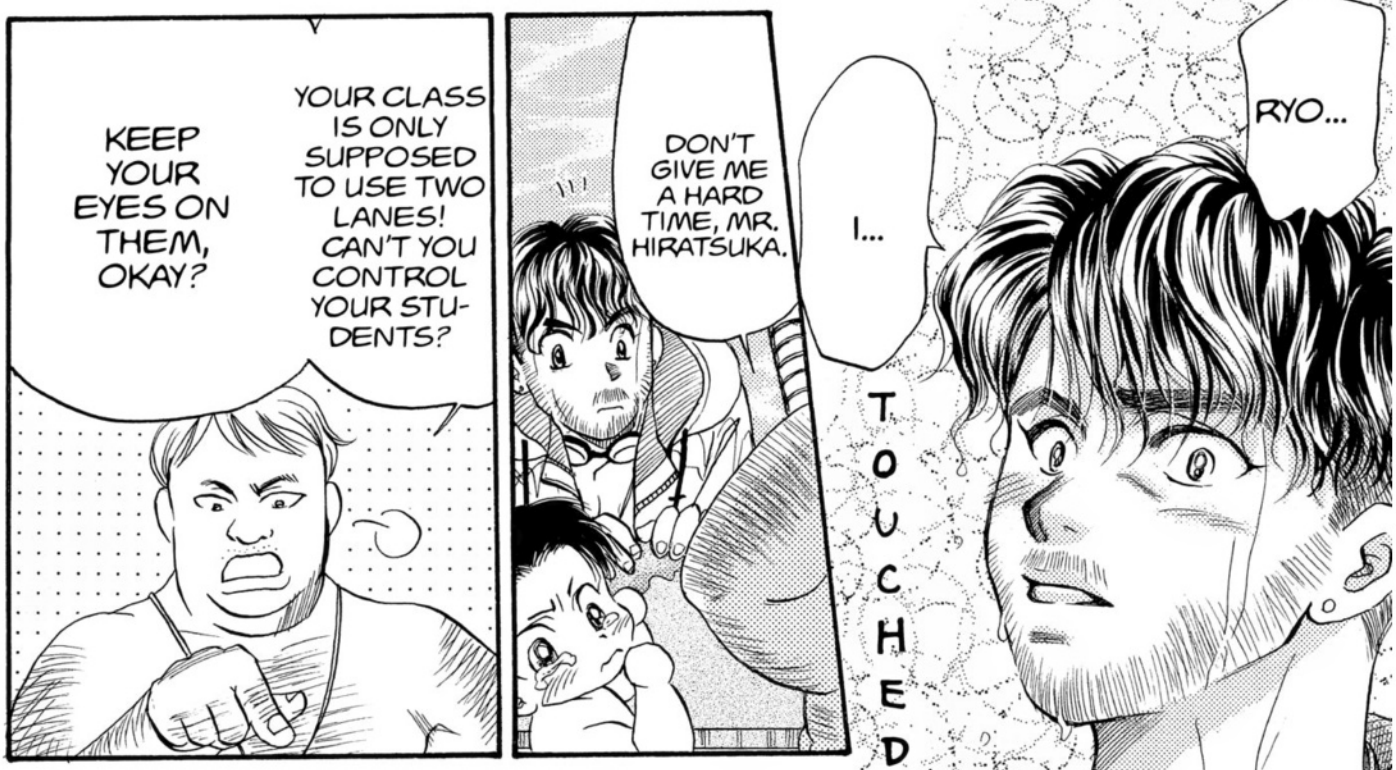

HUH?
WHAP
WHAP
HUH?

...ANY-THING WEIRD!
IT'S NOT...
IGNORING

PLEASE LET ME TRAIN YOU!!
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOUR TALENT!
YOU'VE BOTH GOT TALENT!

SHOSUKE!
YOU IDIOT!!
THWAK
UGH!!
OOF!!
PLOOSH
BLUP BLUP BLUP
WAAH!!
TOMOYA
KOFF KOFF
WHAT THE HECK?
STOP THAT, RYO!
IT'S DANGER-OUS!!
PLIP
PLIP
UNH...
UBB...
PLIP
PLIP
R-RYO, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
BLUB
BLUB
BEATS ME.

SOB
I WANT TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE!
I WANT TO BE A WORLD-CLASS SWIMMER LIKE YOU WERE!!
SOB
I WANT TO LEARN TO SWIM!
...
...WORK WITH ME MORE?
SOB
WHY DON'T YOU...
SOB

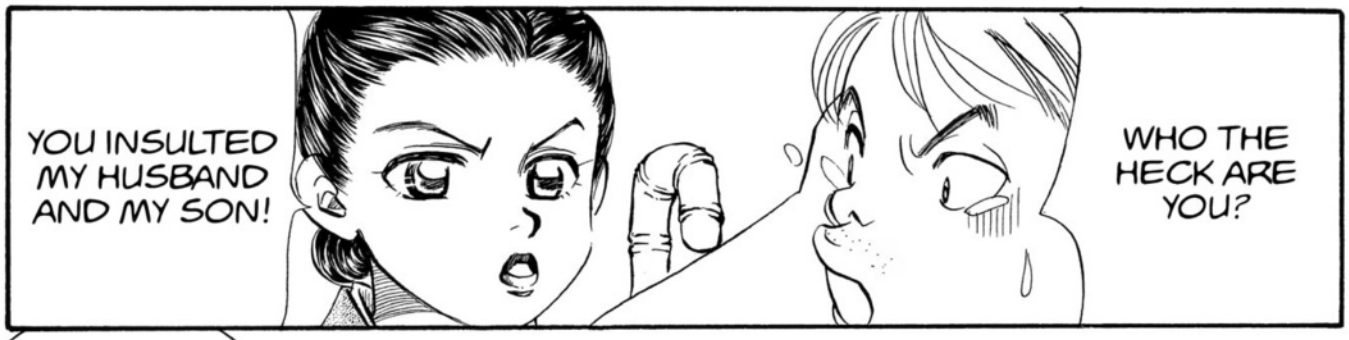

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THEM, OKAY?
YOUR CLASS IS ONLY SUPPOSED TO USE TWO LANES! CAN'T YOU CONTROL YOUR STUDENTS?
DON'T GIVE ME A HARD TIME, MR. HIRATSUKA.
I...
RYO...
TOUCHED

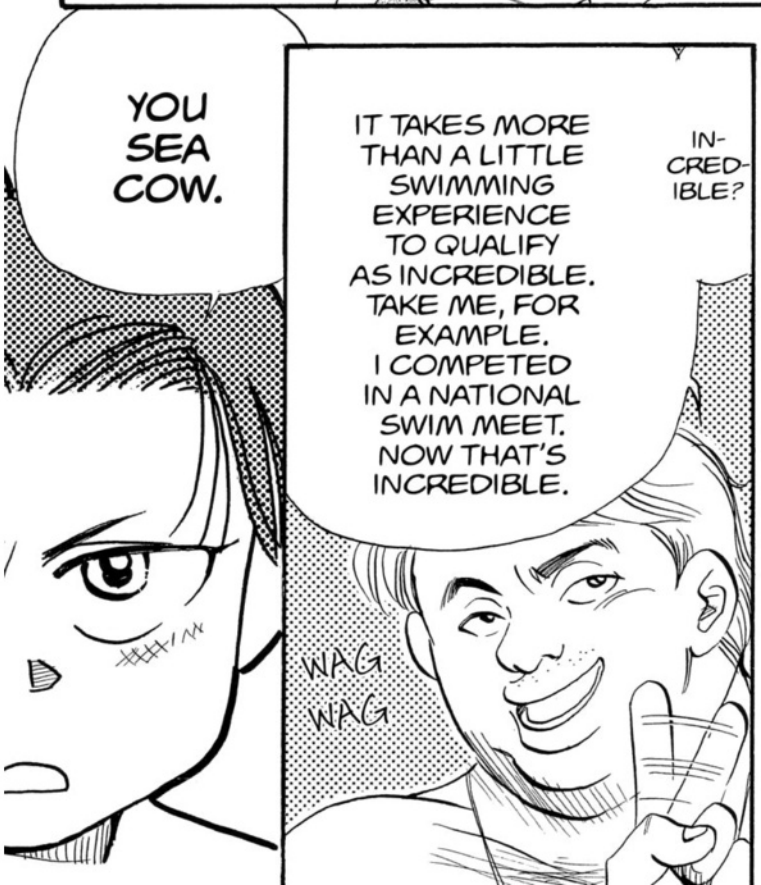
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON, I GUESS.
HMPH...
SPLASH
SORRY.

WHAK
DON'T TALK TO HIM LIKE THAT!
UGH!!

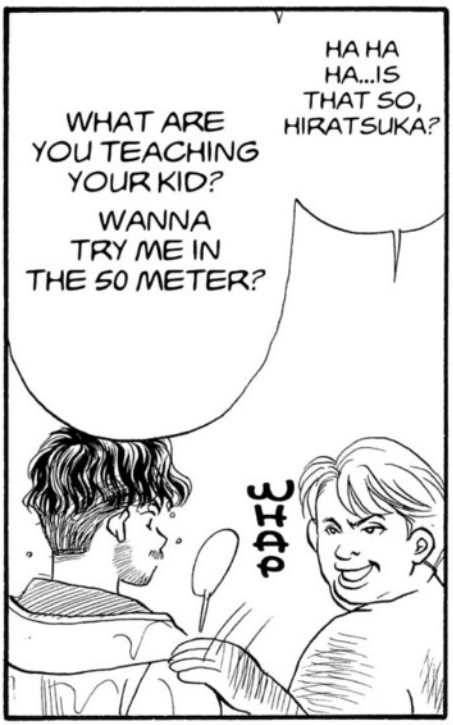
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?

YOU'RE A LOSER AND A LOUSY SWIMMING INSTRUCTOR!
I MEAN YOU'RE BOTH KNUCKLE-HEADS.
I DON'T KNOW WHY THE CLUB HIRED YOU.


YOU INSULTED MY HUSBAND AND MY SON!
WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?


YOU SEA COW.
IT TAKES MORE THAN A LITTLE SWIMMING EXPERIENCE TO QUALIFY AS INCREDIBLE. TAKE ME, FOR EXAMPLE. I COMPETED IN A NATIONAL SWIM MEET. NOW THAT'S INCREDIBLE.
IN-CRED-IBLE?
WAG WAG

THEY'RE LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH AN INCREDIBLE MAN FOR AN INSTRUCTOR!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHY THIS CLUB HIRED HIM?
K-KIRIKA, TAKE IT EASY!

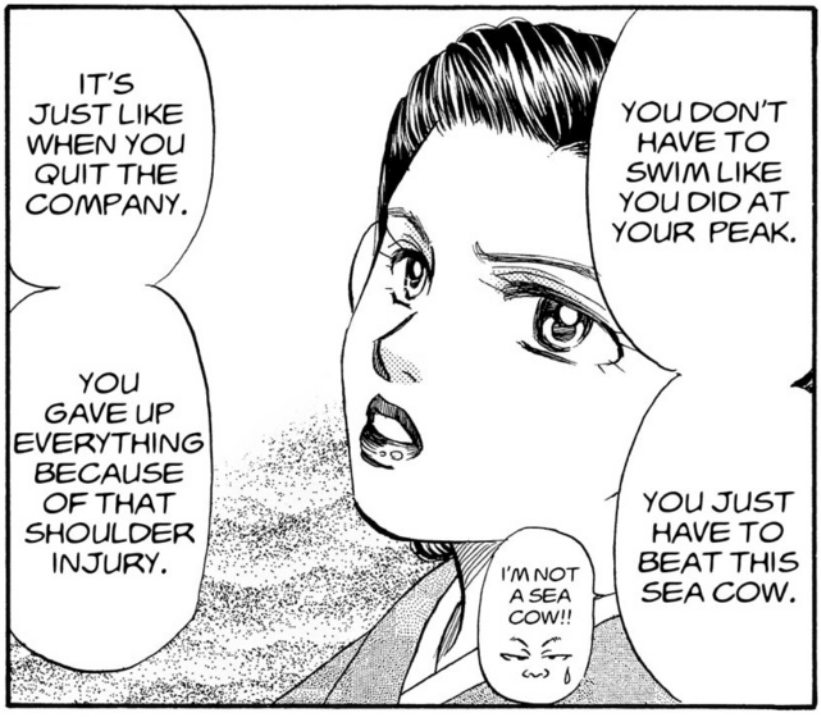

HA HA HA...IS THAT SO, HIRATSUKA?
WHAT ARE YOU TEACHING YOUR KID?
WANNA TRY ME IN THE 50 METER?
ぷかぷ

BUT I BET HE CAN SWIM FASTER THAN YOU CAN!

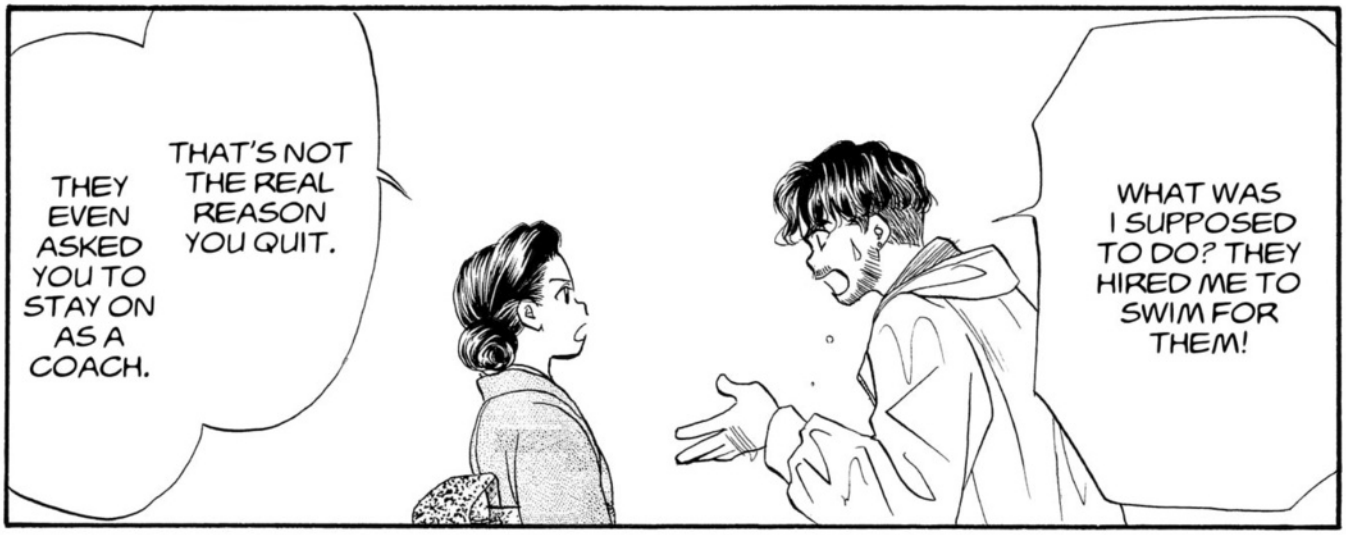
MY DAD CAN'T SWIM FAST ANYMORE BECAUSE HE HURT HIS SHOULDER!
S-SEA COW?

YOU ALWAYS THINK YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
I CAN'T SWIM AS FAST AS I USED TO.

YOU HEARD THE BOY.
I INJURED MY SHOULDER.

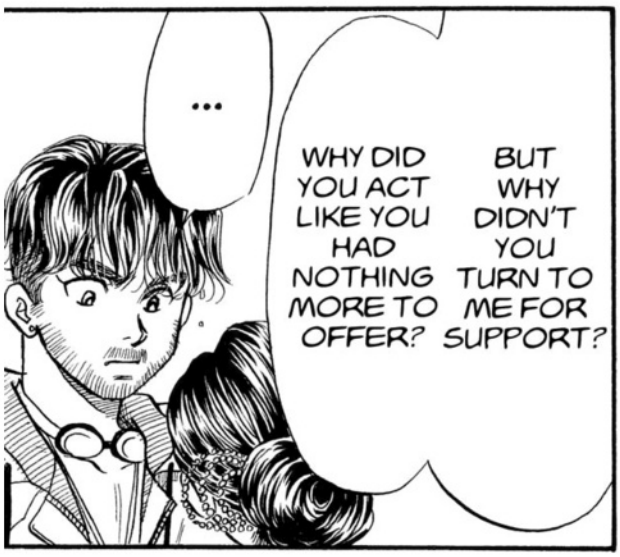

IT'S JUST LIKE WHEN YOU QUIT THE COMPANY.
YOU GAVE UP EVERYTHING BECAUSE OF THAT SHOULDER INJURY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SWIM LIKE YOU DID AT YOUR PEAK.
YOU JUST HAVE TO BEAT THIS SEA COW.
I'M NOT A SEA COW!!

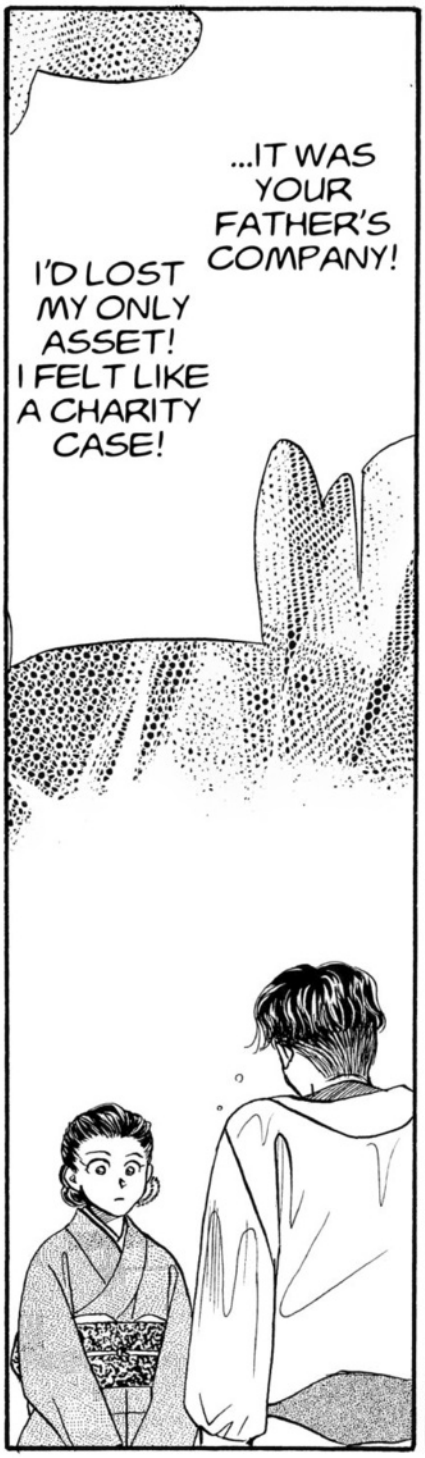
WHAT?


THEY EVEN ASKED YOU TO STAY ON AS A COACH.
THAT'S NOT THE REAL REASON YOU QUIT.
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO? THEY HIRED ME TO SWIM FOR THEM!

THAT WAS WHY YOU QUIT.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

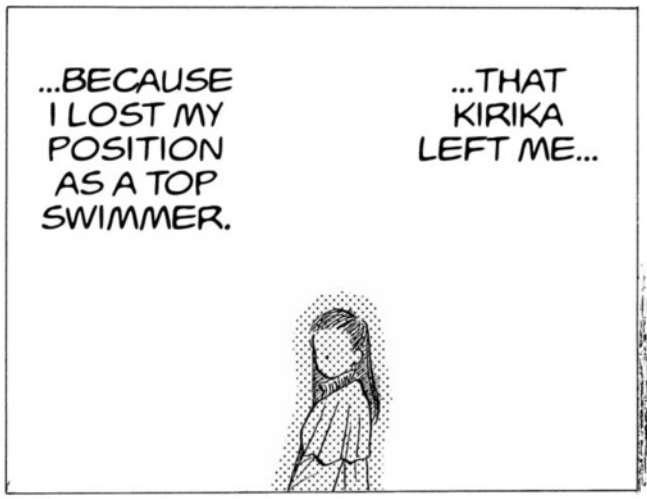
WELL, IT WAS ACTUALLY A RELIEF FOR ME WHEN YOU QUIT THE COMPANY.
YOU FELT LIKE YOU'D MARRIED INTO THE FAMILY BUSINESS.


...
WHY DID YOU ACT LIKE YOU HAD NOTHING MORE TO OFFER?
BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU TURN TO ME FOR SUPPORT?

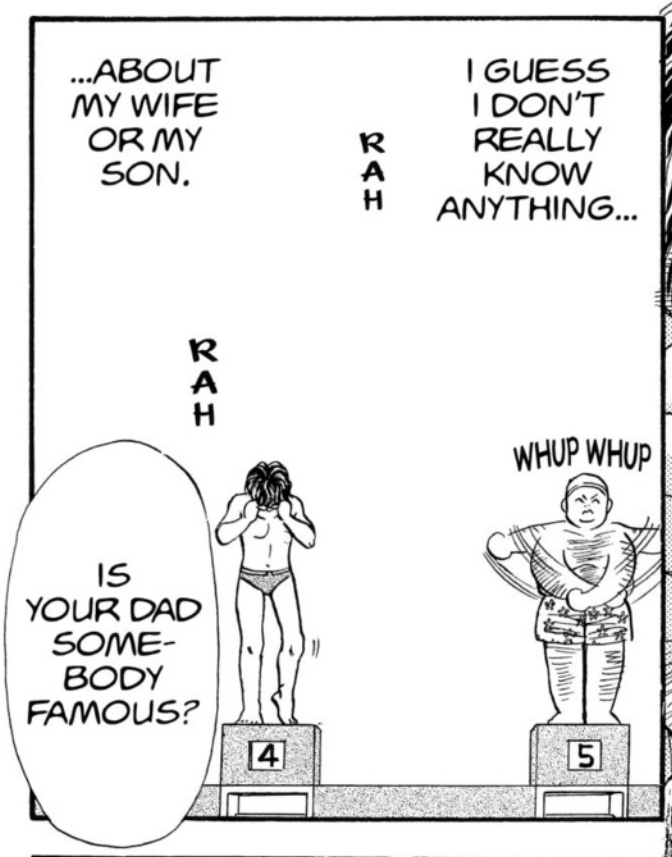

I'D LOST MY ONLY ASSET! I FELT LIKE A CHARITY CASE!
...IT WAS YOUR FATHER'S COMPANY!

THROB
BUT YOU SLUNK OFF LIKE A BEATEN DOG!

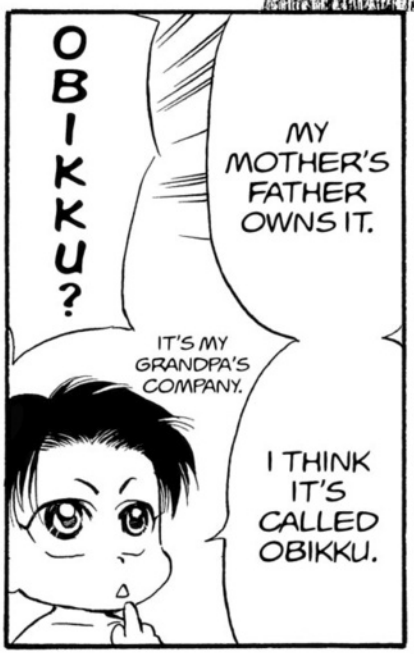
YOU'RE RIGHT! I QUIT BECAUSE...


...BECAUSE I LOST MY POSITION AS A TOP SWIMMER.
...THAT KIRIKA LEFT ME...

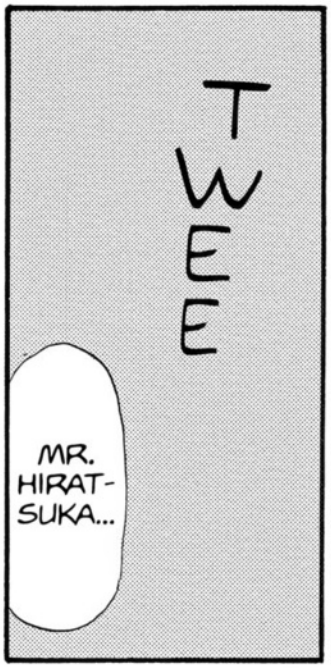
I JUST WANT YOU TO BELIEVE IN YOUR-SELF!
WAH
WON'T YOU LET ME HELP YOU AS YOUR WIFE?
I ALWAYS THOUGHT ...
WAH


...ABOUT MY WIFE OR MY SON.
RAH
I GUESS I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYTHING...
RAH
WHUP WHUP
IS YOUR DAD SOME-BODY FAMOUS?
4
5

HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT, SEIICHI?
OBIKKU IS A MAJOR PRODUCER OF SPORTS EQUIPMENT! THEY MADE MY BASKET-BALL SHOES.


OBIKKU?
MY MOTHER'S FATHER OWNS IT.
IT'S MY GRANDPA'S COMPANY.
I THINK IT'S CALLED OBIKKU.

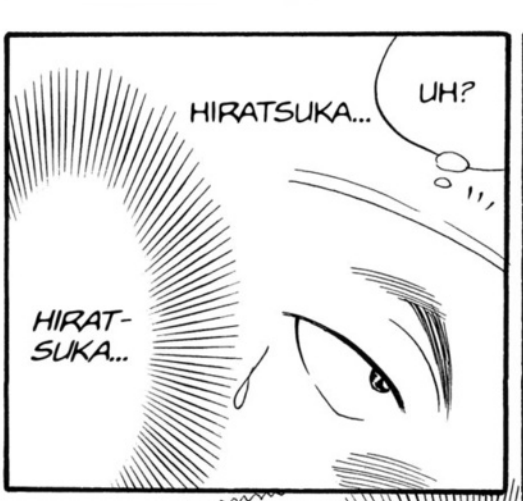
HE SAID HE WAS ON A CORPOR-ATE SWIM TEAM. WHICH COMPANY WAS IT?
HUH?


TWEE
MR. HIRAT-SUKA...

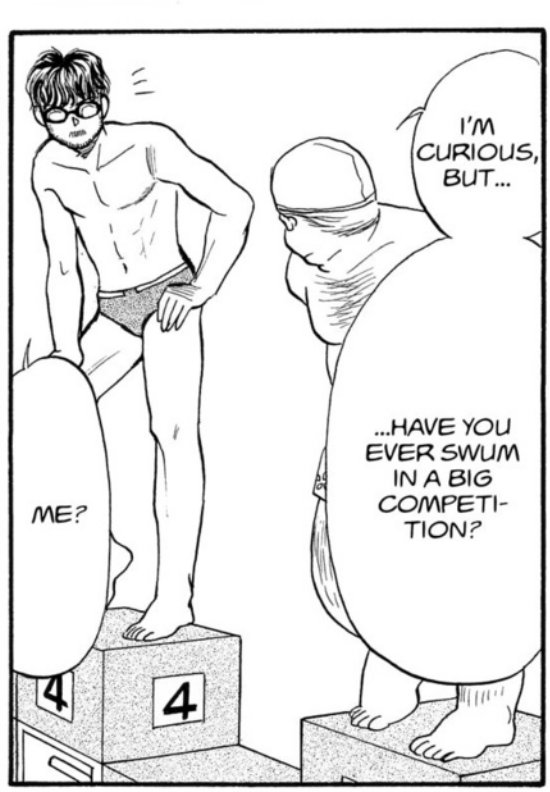
I'VE ONLY SEEN HIM RACE ON A VIDEOTAPE MY MOM SHOWED ME.

I NEVER EVEN GOT TO SEE HIM COMPETE IN PERSON.
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO ME.

WOW
HE WAS A MEMBER OF A TOP CORPOR-ATE TEAM!

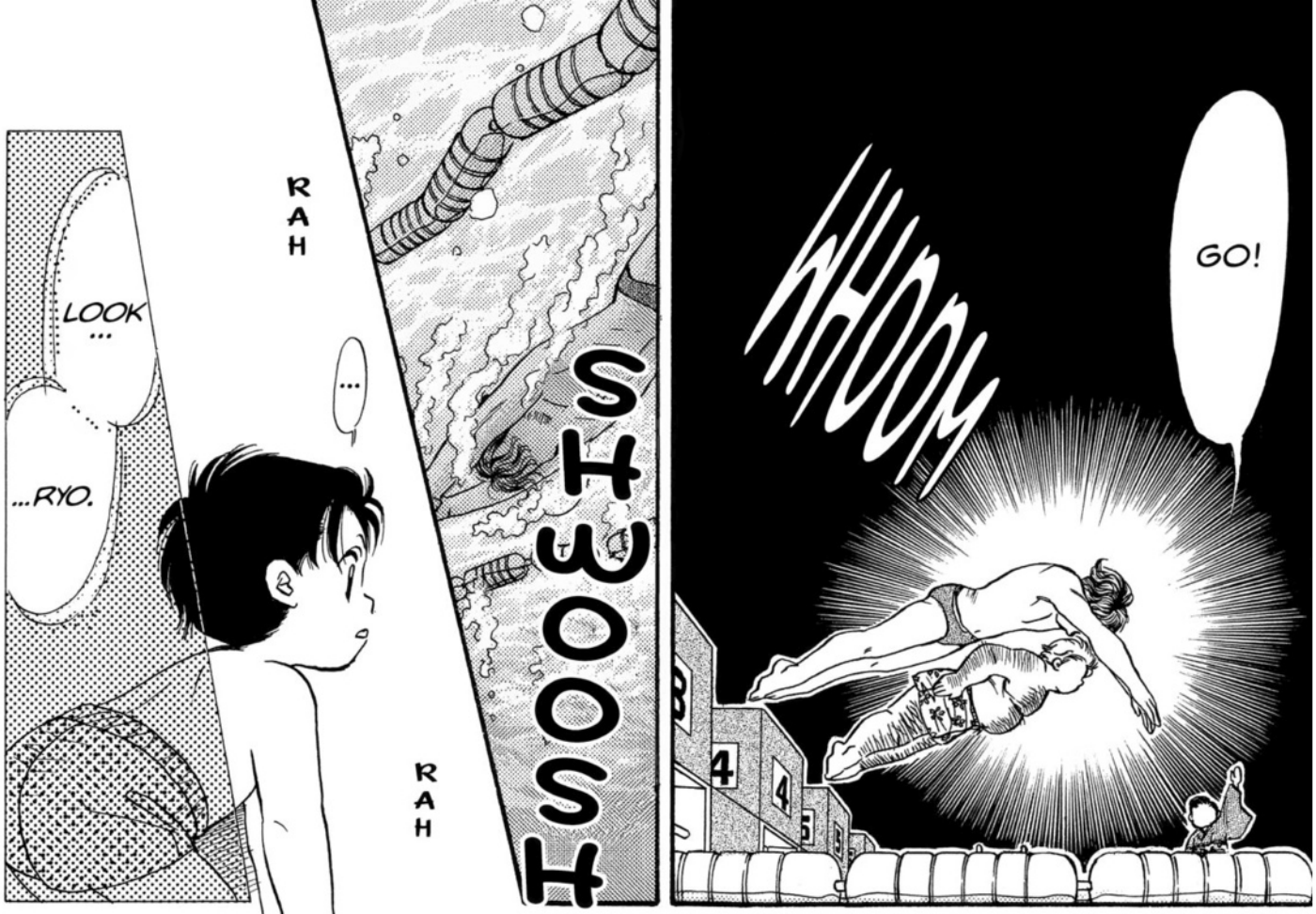

UH?
HIRATSUKA...
HIRAT-SUKA...

READY, SET...


I'M CURIOUS, BUT...
...HAVE YOU EVER SWUM IN A BIG COMPETI-TION?
ME?
4
4

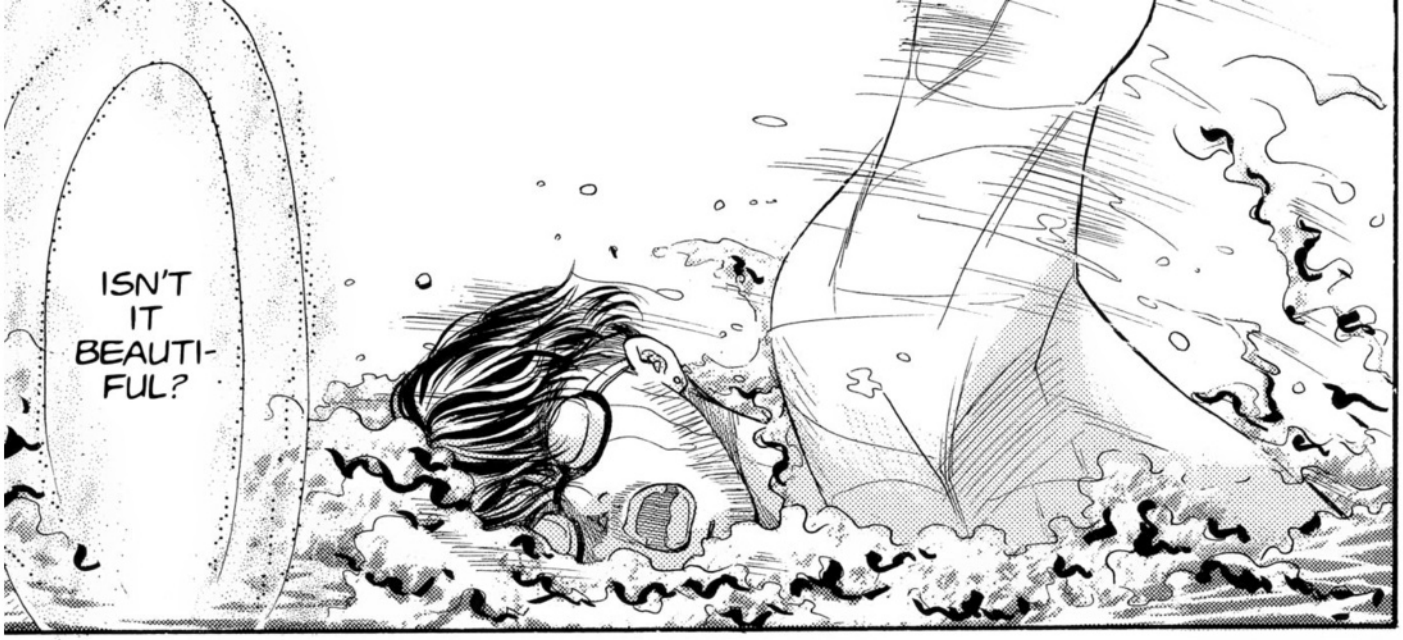
WELL...
...SEVERAL, ACTUALLY.
I COMPETED FOR A SPOT ON THE JAPANESE OLYMPIC TEAM.

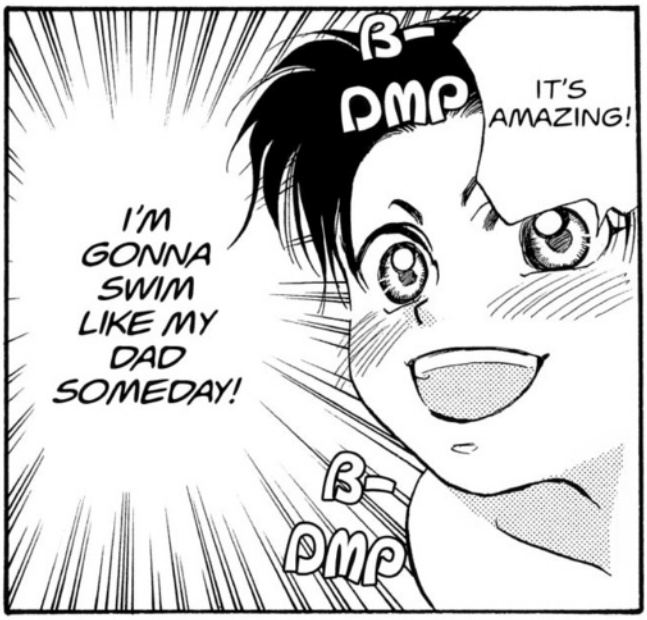
HIRATSUKA INJURES SHOULDER
LOCKING TURN MOM
HIRAT-SUKA OF JAPAN ...
...RETIRES FROM WORLD COMPETI-TION!


GO!
WHOOM
SHWOOSH
RAH
RAH
LOOK ...
...RYO.
...

IT'S A VIDEO OF ONE OF YOUR FATHER'S RACES.
RAH
RAH
HIRATSUKA IN LANE FOUR HAS JUST MADE THE 50-METER TURN!

RAH
RAH
RAH
RAH


ISN'T IT BEAUTI-FUL?

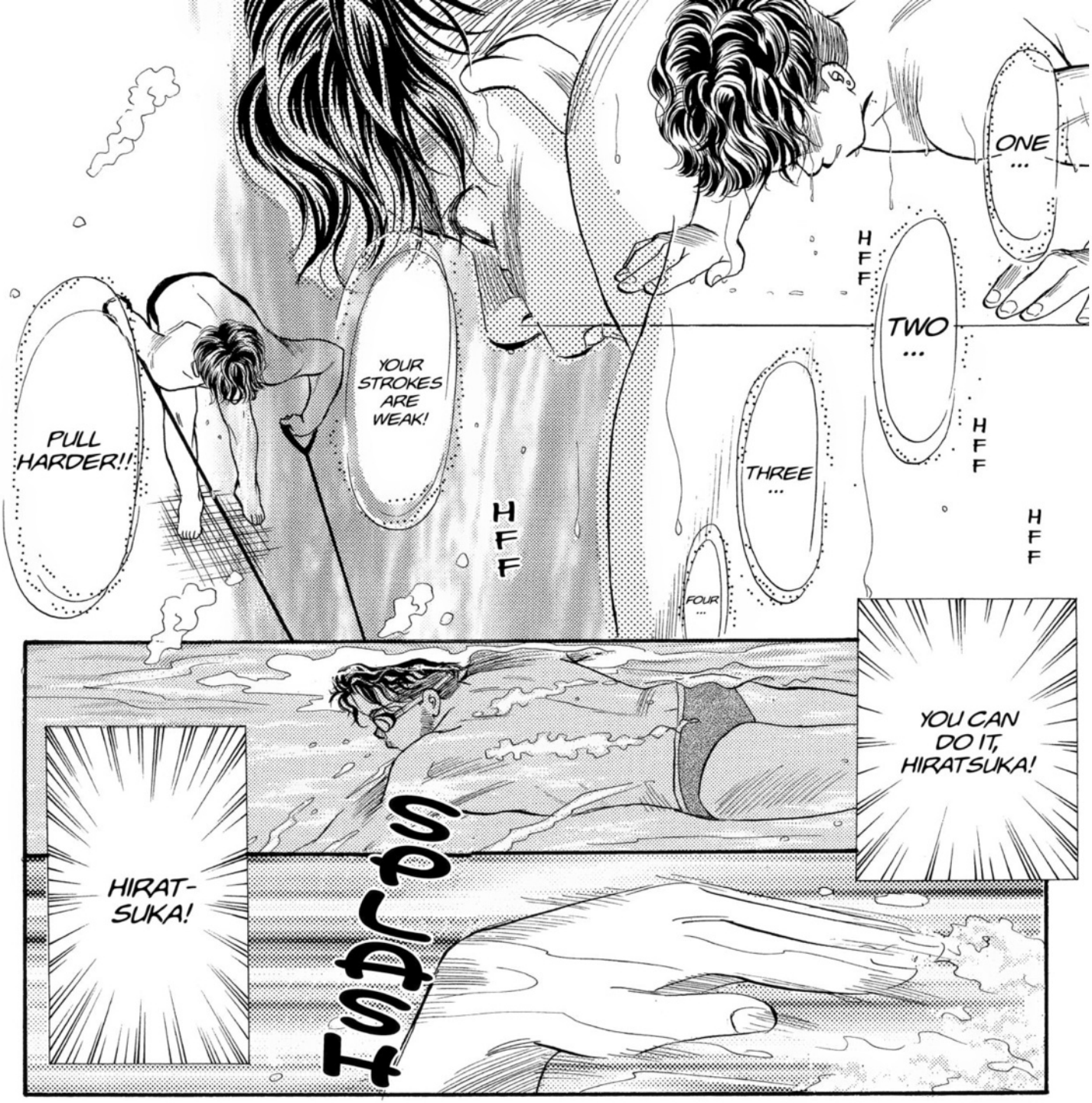

B-DMP
IT'S AMAZING!
I'M GONNA SWIM LIKE MY DAD SOMEDAY!
B-DMP

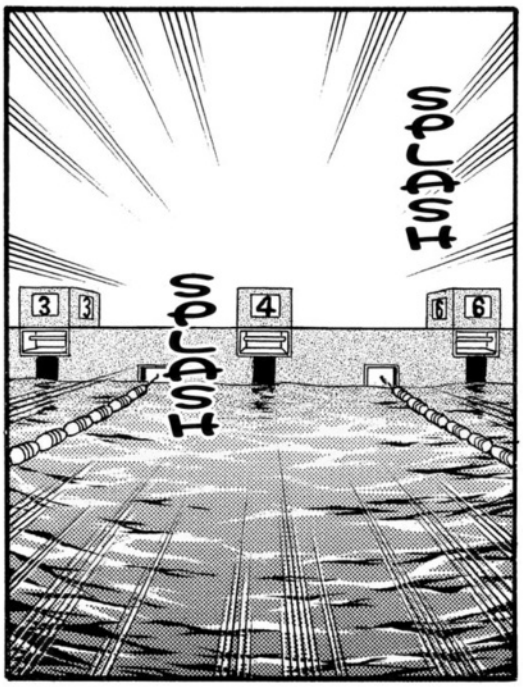
IT'S LIKE HE'S FLYING THROUGH THE WATER.
ISN'T IT?
ISN'T IT?

WOW ...

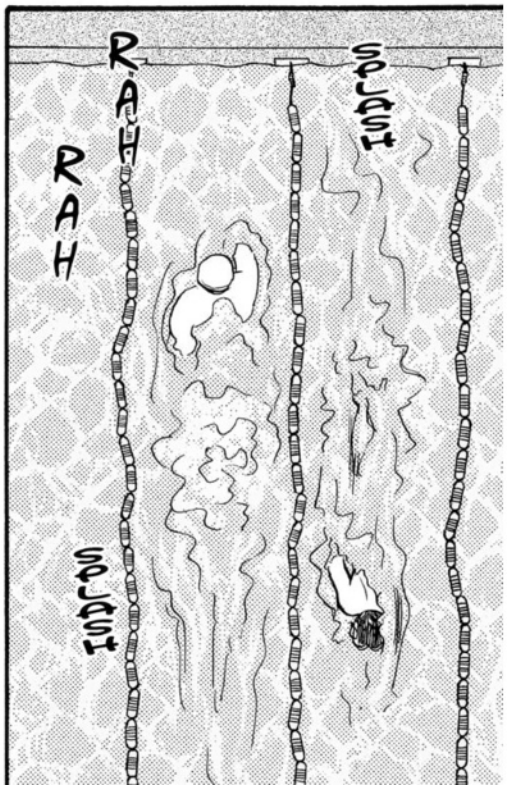
HANG IN THERE, HIRAT-SUKA!
RAH
YOU'RE GONNA GO ALL THE WAY, HIRATSUKA.
RAH
FOUR MORE SETS OF PUSH-UPS!
RAH

BLUP
BLUP
BLUP
BLUP


PULL HARDER!!
YOUR STROKES ARE WEAK!
HFF
ONE ...
HFF
TWO ...
HFF
THREE ...
HFF
FOUR ...
YOU CAN DO IT, HIRATSUKA!
HIRAT-SUKA!
SPLASH


SPLASH
SPLASH
3
3
4
6
6

I CAN'T CATCH HIM!
NO WAY!
SPLASH
SPLASH


SPLASH
RAH
RAH
SPLASH

4
RAH
RAH
SLAP
NEW MEET RECORD
RAH
HFF
HFF
YAY!!
HFF
RAH
THAT'S IT.
HFF
CONGRATU-LATIONS, HIRATSUKA!
SWIMMING IS MY PASSION...
...NOW AND FOREVER.
HFF
HFF

YOU SWIM BEAUTI-FULLY!

I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU!

YOUR FORM IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER.

KIRIKA...

DAD!

THAT WAS AMAZING! YOU WERE SO COOL!

I WAS?

SLAP

CRAP!

WEEN

YOU REALLY ARE...

...THE SHOSUKE HIRATSUKA WHO RETIRED FROM THE SWIMMING WORLD FIVE YEARS AGO.

I HAD NO IDEA.

DARN IT!

I JUST LOST MY BRAGGING RIGHTS!

I'M BLESSED.

I GET TO DO SOME-THING I LOVE.

EVERY NOW AND THEN...

FOR NOW...

...I'M HAPPY TO BE TEACHING KIDS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WORKING HERE?

YOU SHOULD BE COACHING COMPETITIVE SWIMMERS AT A MAJOR CLUB!

...

...

...SOMETHING HAPPENS THAT REKINDLES MY PASSION FOR SWIMMING.

WOW!

YEAH! TODAY WAS AWE-SOME!!

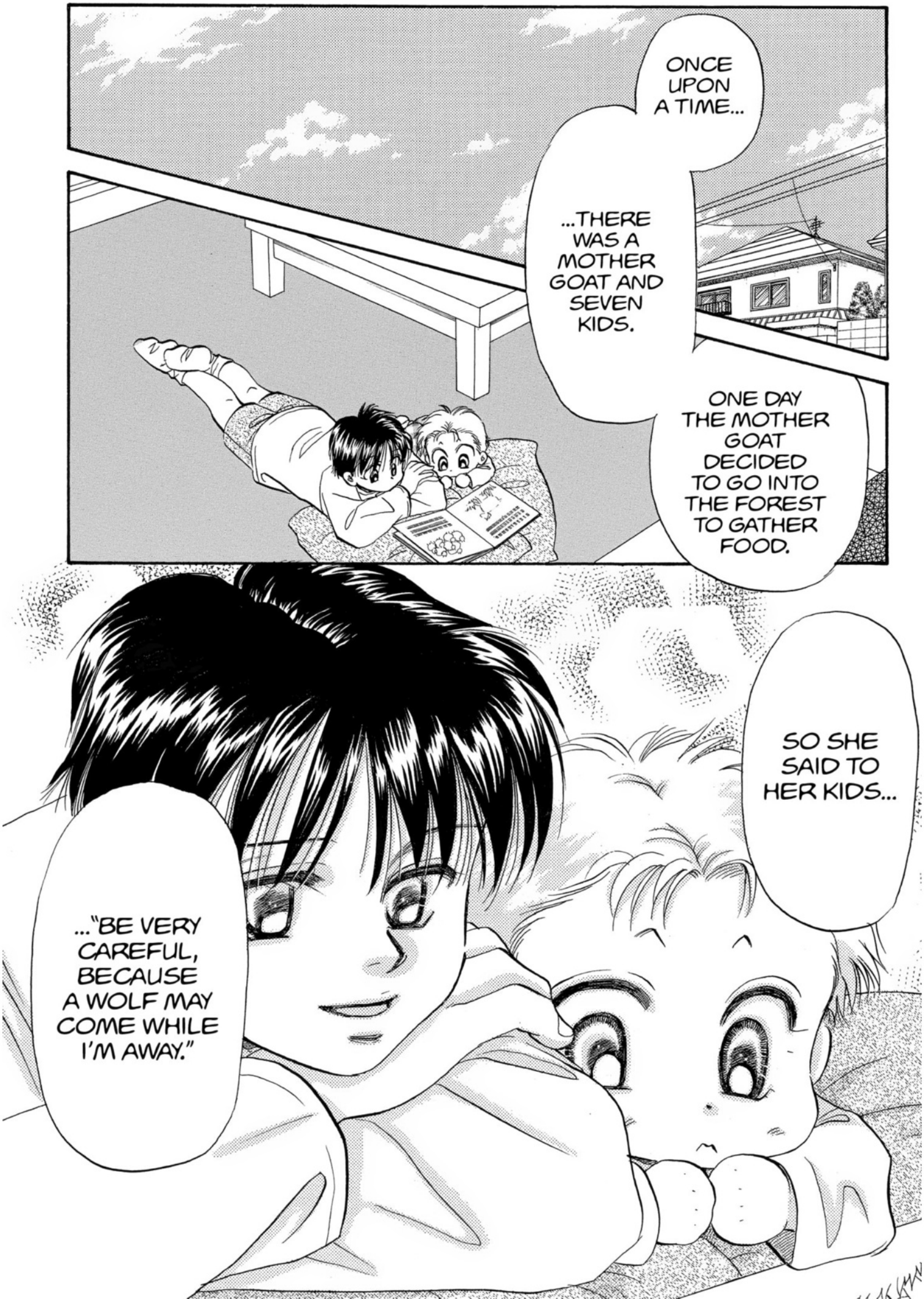
THAT WAS REALLY COOL!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CLASS?

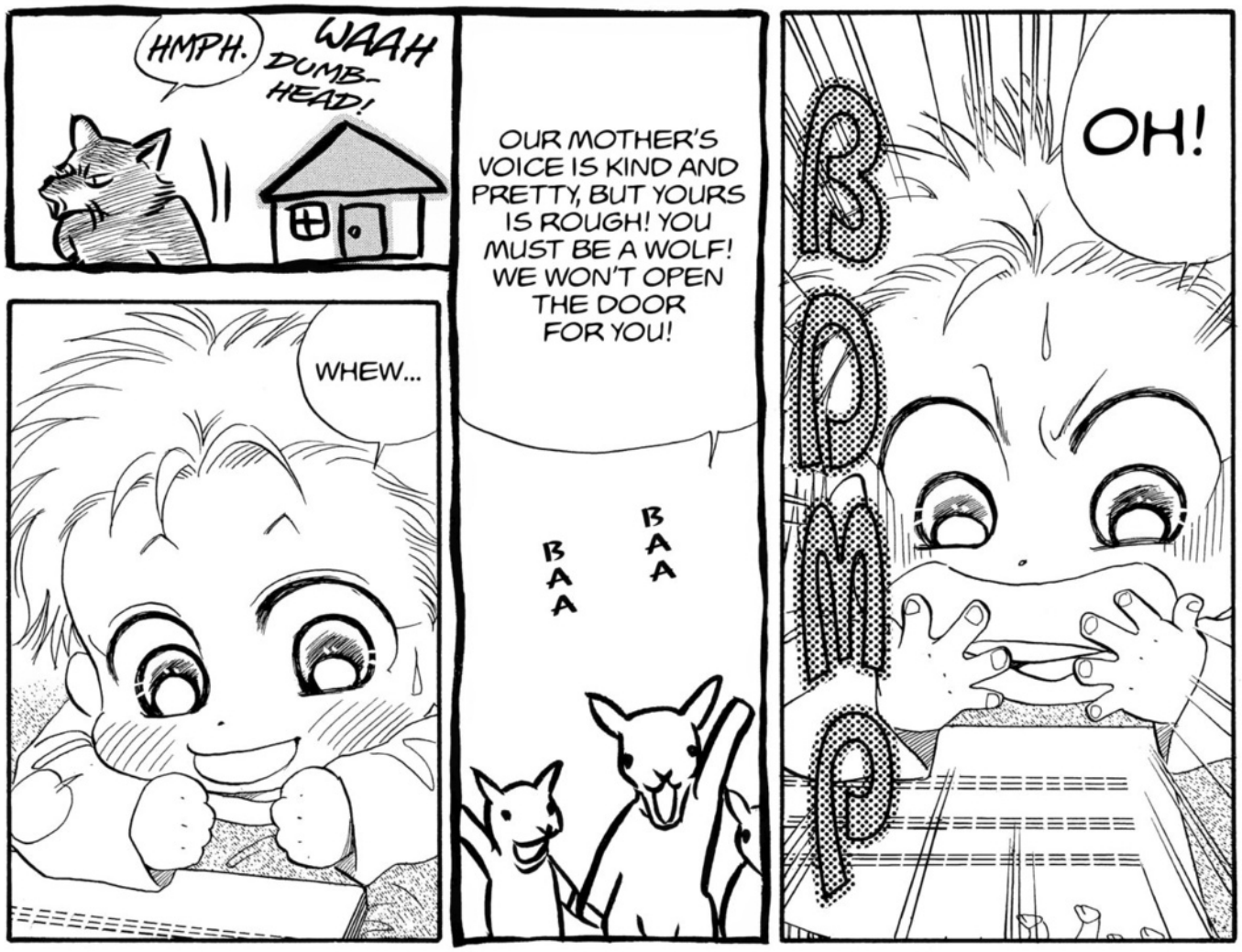
AKIHIRO

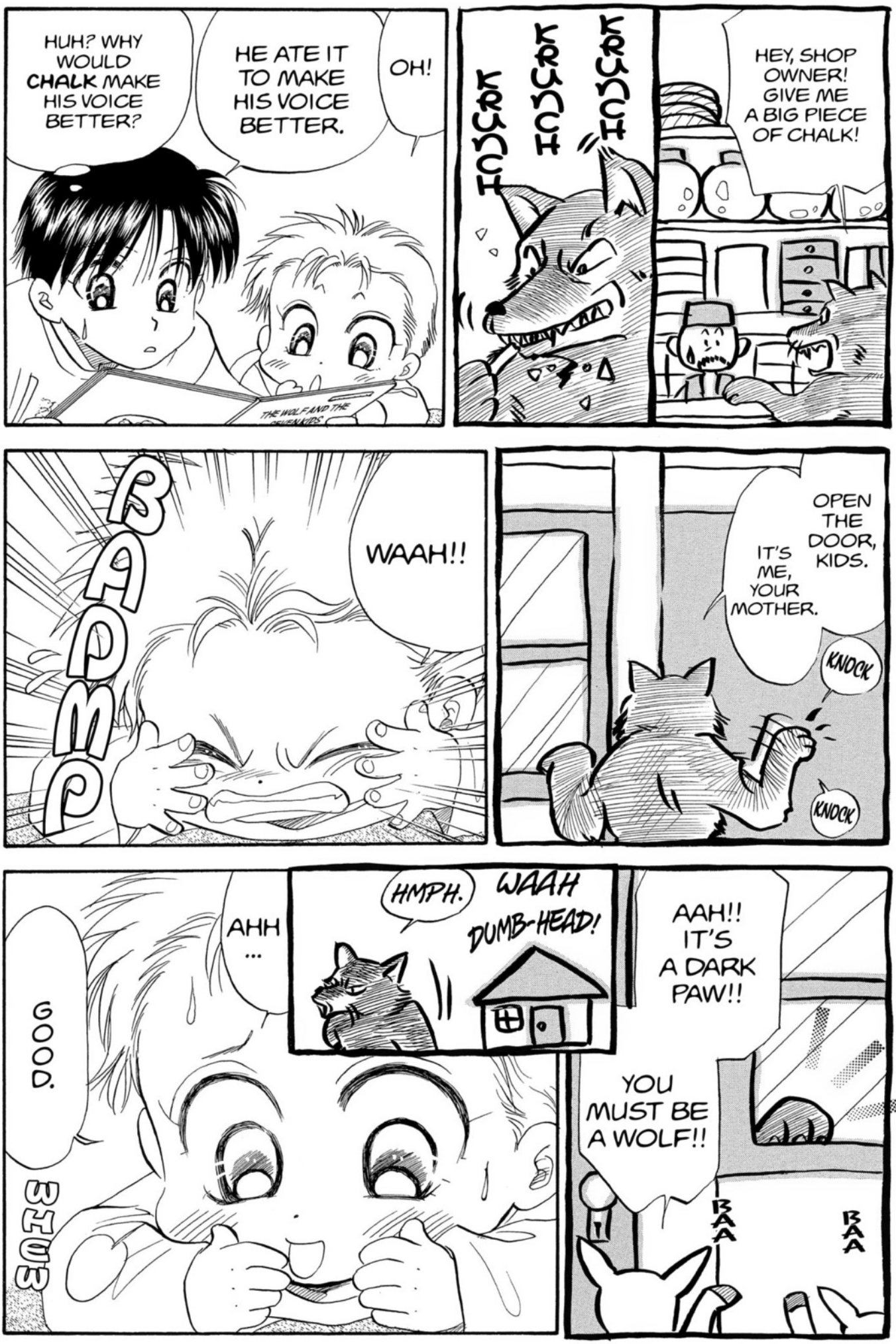
Chapter 83 / The End

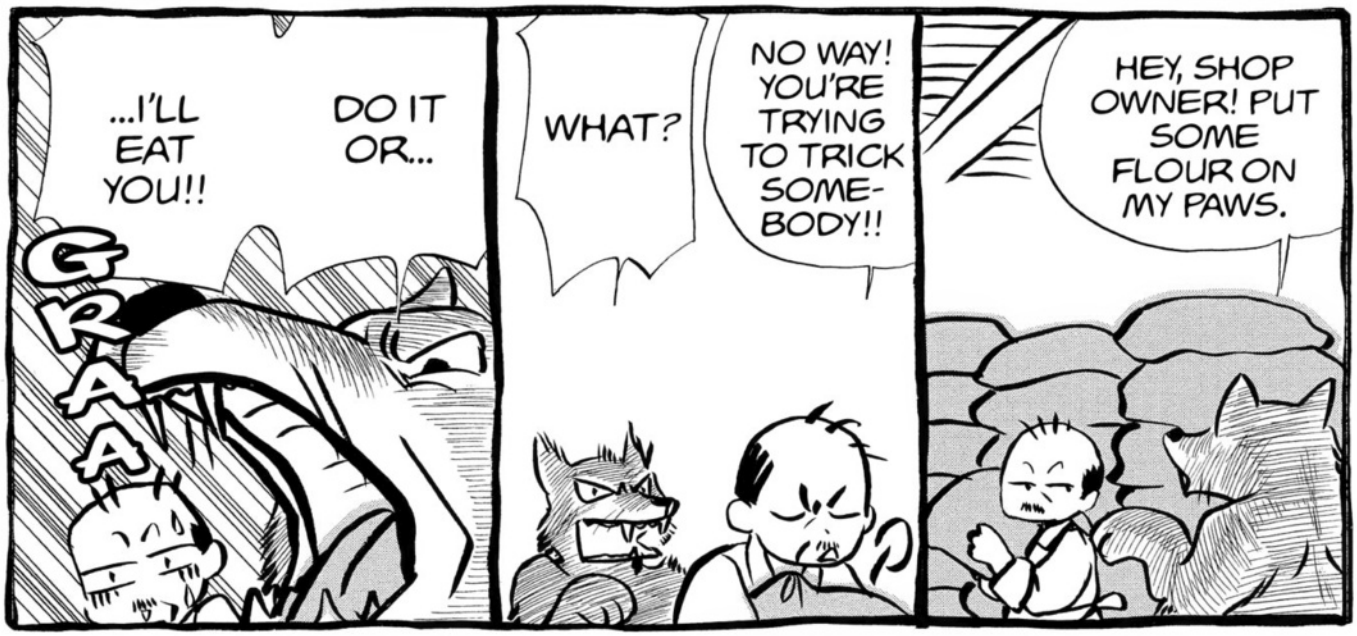
Chapter 84
WAG WAG
MAMMAL MINO-GOAT MADE IN JAPAN
BABY & Me

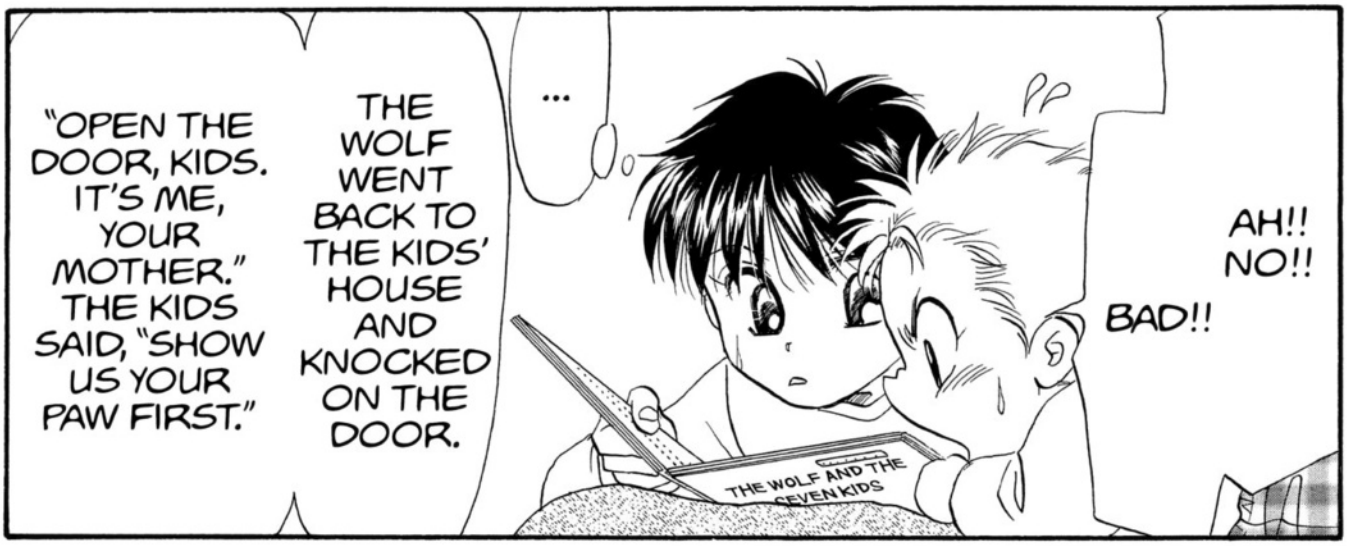

ONCE UPON A TIME...
...THERE WAS A MOTHER GOAT AND SEVEN KIDS.
ONE DAY THE MOTHER GOAT DECIDED TO GO INTO THE FOREST TO GATHER FOOD.
SO SHE SAID TO HER KIDS...
..."BE VERY CAREFUL, BECAUSE A WOLF MAY COME WHILE I'M AWAY."

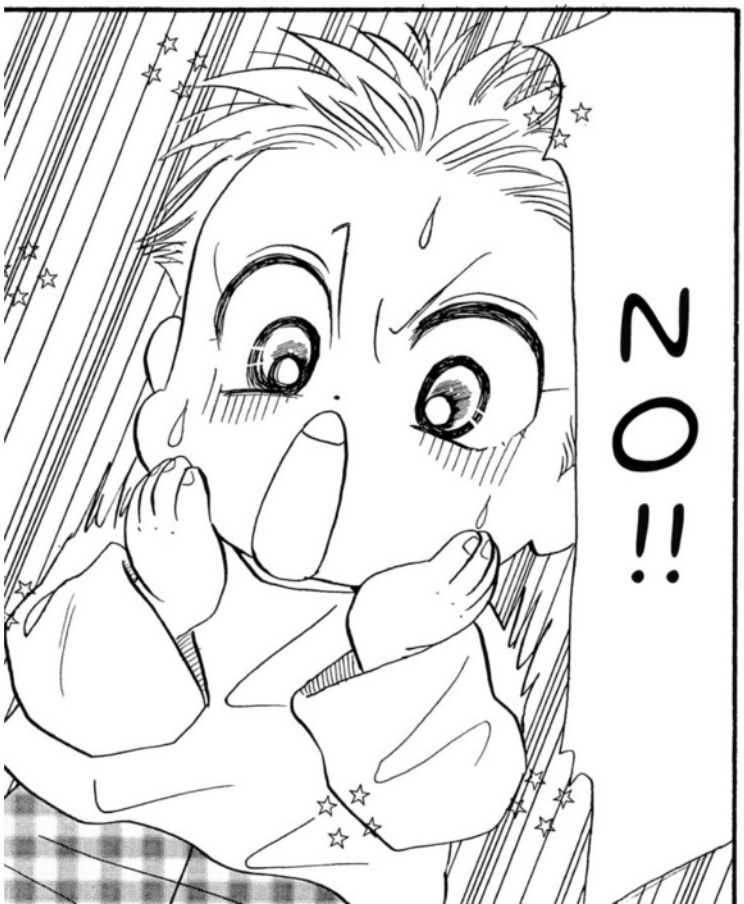
BYE-BYE, MOMMY!
HEH HEH HEH...SHE'S GONE.
OKAY.
YOU'LL KNOW THE WOLF BY HIS ROUGH VOICE AND DARK PAWS.
!!
KNOCK
KNOCK
OPEN THE DOOR, KIDS.
IT'S ME, YOUR MOTHER.


HMPH.
WAAH
DUMB-HEAD!
WHEW...
OUR MOTHER'S VOICE IS KIND AND PRETTY, BUT YOURS IS ROUGH! YOU MUST BE A WOLF! WE WON'T OPEN THE DOOR FOR YOU!
BAA
BAA
OH!
BAMMP


HUH? WHY WOULD CHALK MAKE HIS VOICE BETTER?
HE ATE IT TO MAKE HIS VOICE BETTER.
OH!
THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS
KRUNCH
KRUNCH
KRUNCH
HEY, SHOP OWNER! GIVE ME A BIG PIECE OF CHALK!
BAMMP
WAAH!!
OPEN THE DOOR, KIDS.
IT'S ME, YOUR MOTHER.
KNOCK
KNOCK
AHH ...
GOOD.
WHEW
HMPH.
WAAH
DUMB-HEAD!
AAH!! IT'S A DARK PAW!!
YOU MUST BE A WOLF!!
BAA
BAA


...I'LL EAT YOU!!
DO IT OR...
GRAA
WHAT?
NO WAY! YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK SOME-BODY!!
HEY, SHOP OWNER! PUT SOME FLOUR ON MY PAWS.


"OPEN THE DOOR, KIDS. IT'S ME, YOUR MOTHER." THE KIDS SAID, "SHOW US YOUR PAW FIRST."
THE WOLF WENT BACK TO THE KIDS' HOUSE AND KNOCKED ON THE DOOR.
...
AH!! NO!!
BAD!!
THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS


NO!!

IT'S MOMMY!
HEY, A WHITE PAW!

WHOOM

THE FIRST KID HID UNDER THE DESK. THE SECOND HID UNDER THE BED. THE THIRD HID IN THE FIREPLACE. THE FOURTH HID IN THE KITCHEN. THE FIFTH HID IN A CUPBOARD. THE SIXTH HID IN A WASHTUB AND THE SEVENTH KID CLIMBED INTO A CLOCK.

...TO EVERY SINGLE LINE. HE HAS TO REACT ...

OH!

OH!

...

UBB...

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS

AND? AND?

BWAZA...

HE'S MAKING ALL KINDS OF FACES.

TIKOP

TIKOP

BUT FORTUNATELY, THE WOLF DID NOT FIND THE LITTLEST KID, WHO WAS SAFELY HIDDEN INSIDE THE CLOCK.

WHEW ...

SHUP

THE WOLF FOUND THEM EASILY AND SWALLOWED THEM ONE BY ONE.

AH!!

TOPT

DING-DONG!

GWAAH!!

WHAP

AGH!!

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS

Author's Note Part 4

Devil F's Corner: Exposing Ragawa's Secrets

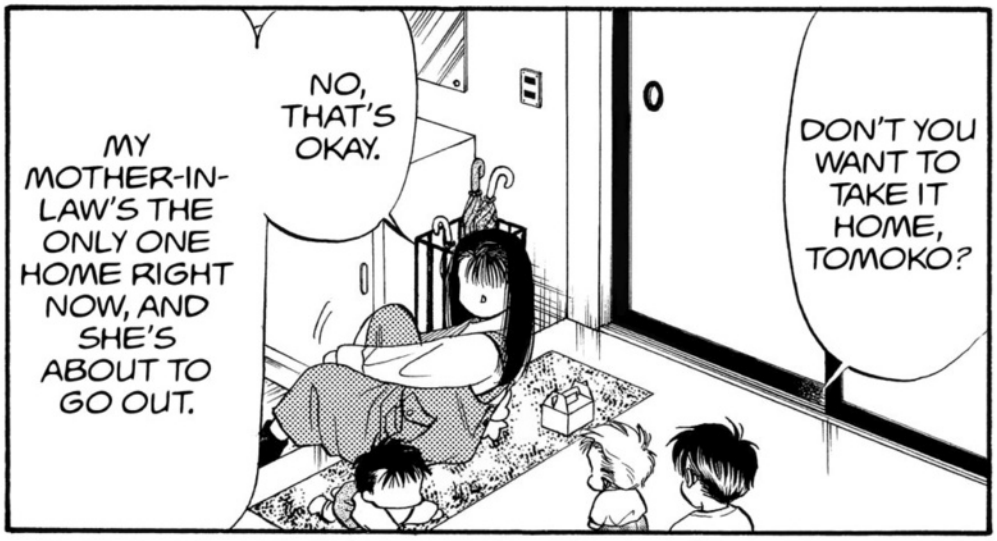
Nice to meet you. I'm Marimo Ragawa's older brother. (Actually, I'm her brother-in-law.) This is my reward for helping her apply screentone when she was up against a deadline. So now I'm going to reveal some of Marimo Ragawa's secrets. But I'm no good at drawing, so it's all in words.

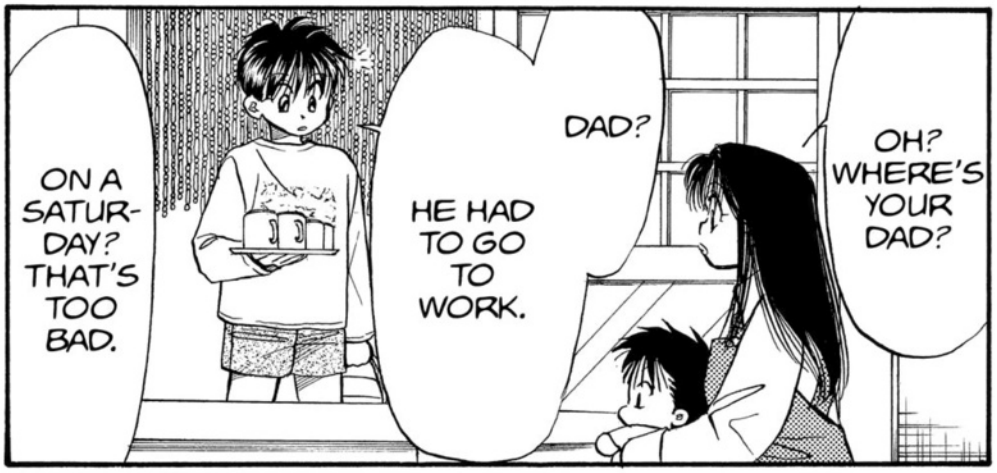
First of all, for some reason, Marimo is good at cutting hair. I didn't trust her in the beginning. Every time she offered to cut my hair, I politely told her no thank you. Then, one day, I decided to let her cut my hair, and she did as good a job as my regular barber. So why pay good money to get a haircut? For the last four years Marimo has been cutting my hair.

Also, for some reason, Marimo is good at giving massages. If you complain about stiff and achy shoulders, she'll creep up on you from behind when you least suspect it, deftly find the most painful pressure point and knead away the stiffness with her golden fingers, which she has strengthened by drawing manga for more than a decade. I can't even describe the feeling.

Finally, Marimo loves to sleep. If you call her up and she doesn't answer the phone, chances are she's sleeping. On the other hand, when I'm just about to go to bed late at night, she'll suddenly call and say, "I can't record on this MiniDisc! I don't know why! Do something!" That's the kind of person Marimo Ragawa is.

Ha ha ha...

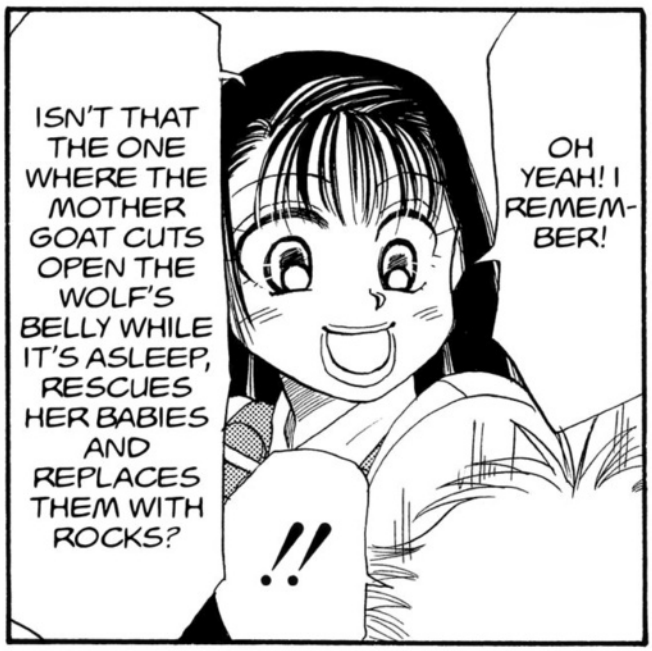


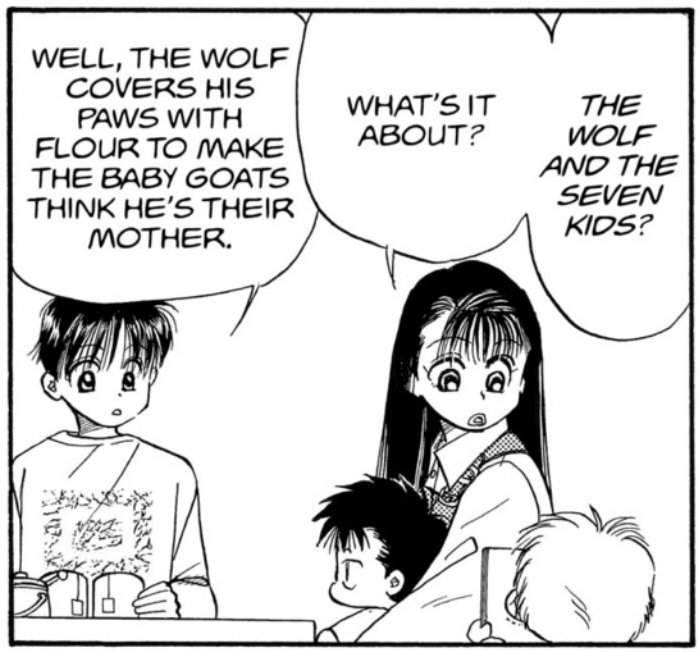


DIS STOWY IS WEAWY GOOD.
UM, UM...
THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS

HUH?

UM... TEA, PLEASE!
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME COFFEE OR TEA?
TUG TUG


ISN'T THAT THE ONE WHERE THE MOTHER GOAT CUTS OPEN THE WOLF'S BELLY WHILE IT'S ASLEEP, RESCUES HER BABIES AND REPLACES THEM WITH ROCKS?
!!
OH YEAH! I REMEMBER!


WELL, THE WOLF COVERS HIS PAWS WITH FLOUR TO MAKE THE BABY GOATS THINK HE'S THEIR MOTHER.
WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS?

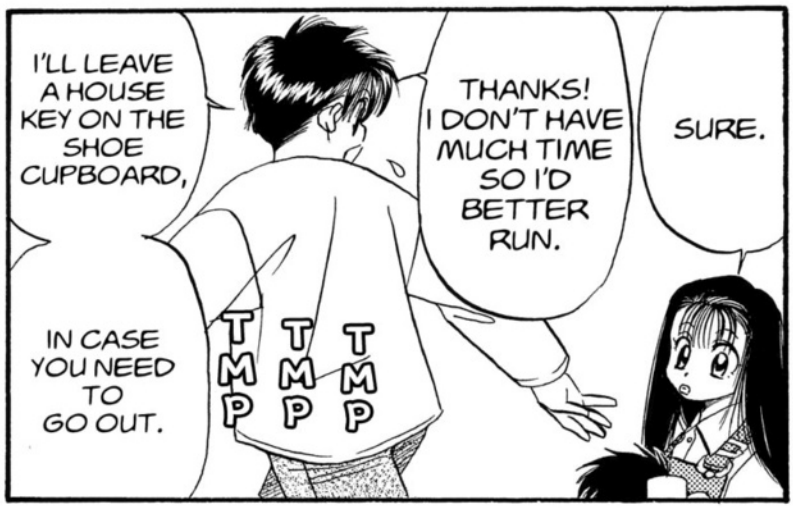
WE HAVEN'T GOT TO THAT PART YET.
WH-WHAT'S WRONG?
POUT

A PICTURE BOOK FOR CHIL
THE WOL

RINGGG RINGGG
OH.
ENOKI RESI-DENCE.
DAD?
OH...
TOMOKO AND TAICHI ARE HERE.
THEY ARE?
TAKUYA, WILL YOU DO ME A FAVOR?
IS THERE A GREEN ENVELOPE ABOUT THE SIZE OF A MAGAZINE ON THE SHOE CUPBOARD?
ENVE-LOPE?
OKAY, THERE'S ...
SNUFF
...A SHEET OF PAPER IN A PLASTIC FOLDER.
THANK GOODNESS. I NEED IT HERE BY THREE O'CLOCK. CAN YOU BRING IT TO ME?
BY THREE O'CLOCK? I DON'T KNOW.
I'D RUN, BUT WITH MINORU...
THERE IT IS.
SHALL I SEE WHAT'S INSIDE?
YES, PLEASE.

I NEED TO TAKE SOMETHING TO MY DAD. WOULD YOU PLEASE WATCH MINORU FOR A WHILE?
TO YOUR DAD?

TOMOKO ...
YES?


SURE.
THANKS! I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME SO I'D BETTER RUN.
I'LL LEAVE A HOUSE KEY ON THE SHOE CUPBOARD,
IN CASE YOU NEED TO GO OUT.
TMP
TMP
TMP

HEY!!
NO!! I GO TOO!!
WHAP

...
OKAY, SEE YOU LATER.

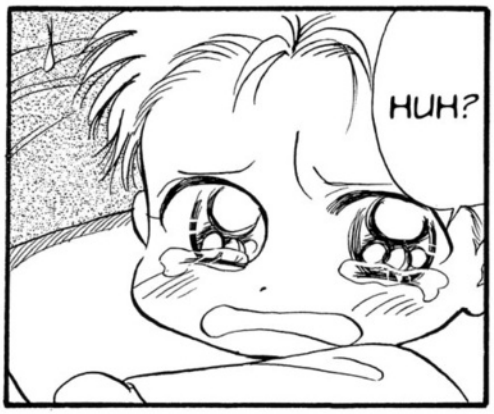
WHERE'S MY WALLET?
KLUNK
KLUNK
HUH?

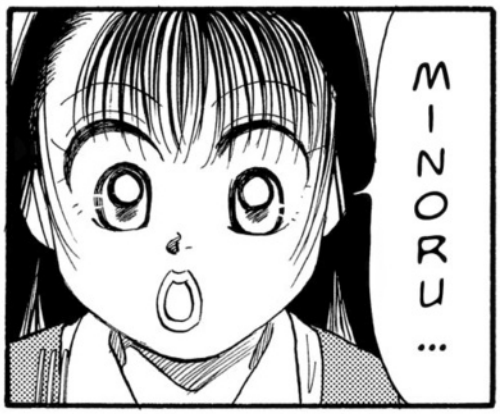
Author's Note Part 5

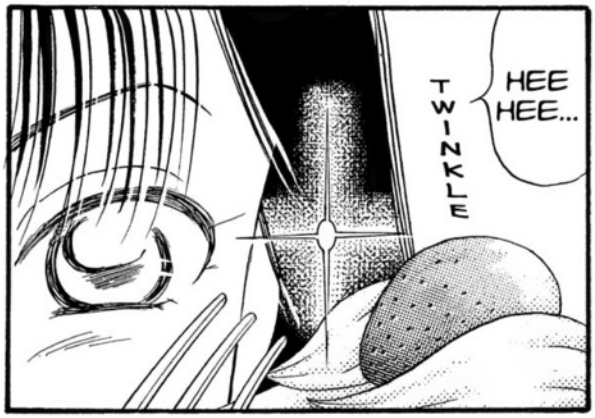
On a Beehive

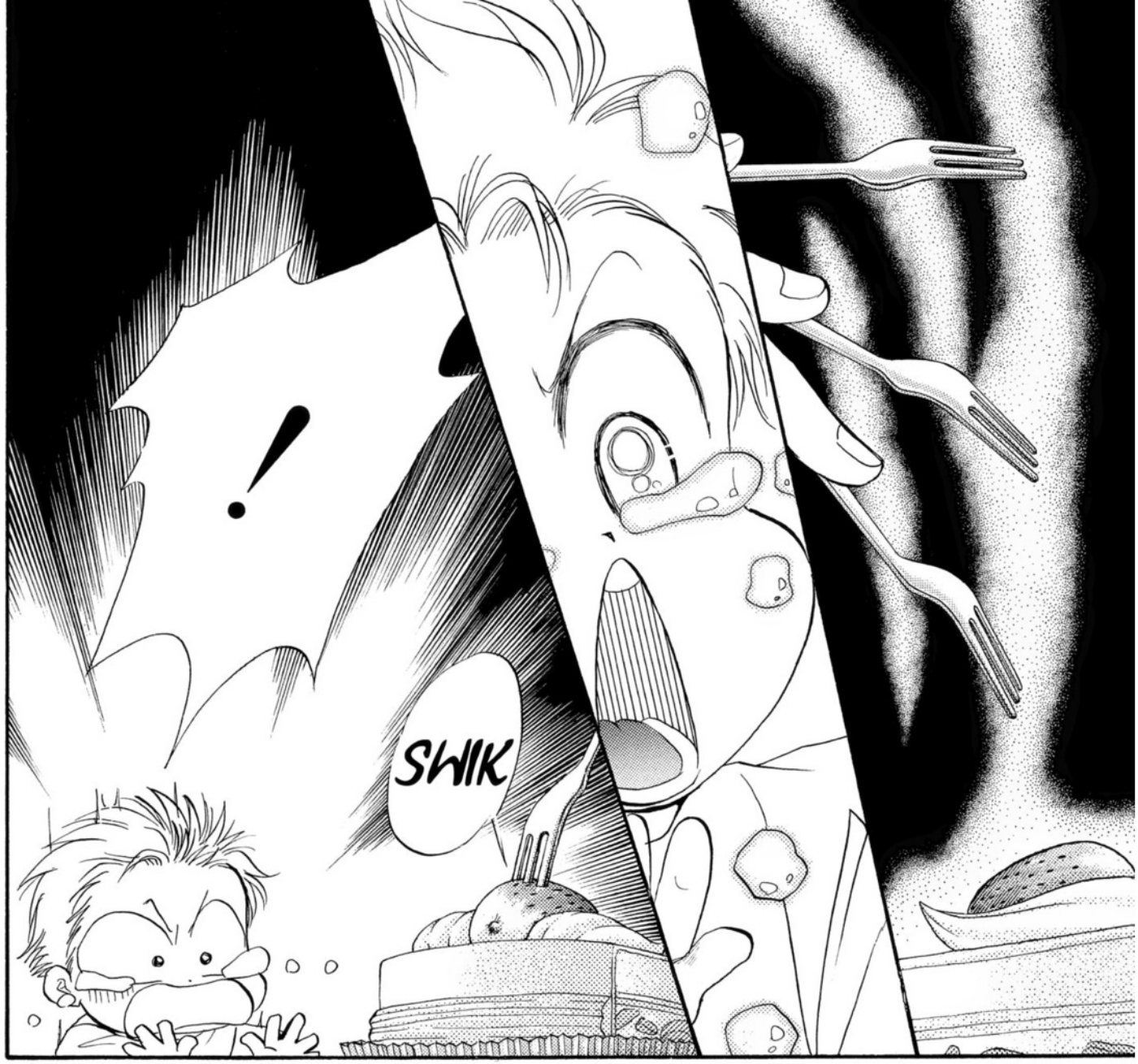
It was August of 1996, and the weeds around our house were about three feet tall, so we decided to pull them. When we finished the job a few hours later, we found a shabby little beehive on the side of our house that had been hidden by the tall weeds. It was only about an inch in diameter and two bees seemed to be guarding it. The next day, one of them was gone. Devil F said it was out looking for building materials while the other one stood guard. The idea moved me somehow. But several more days passed, and the bee hadn't come back. I thought it must have had an accident.

Continued in Part 6







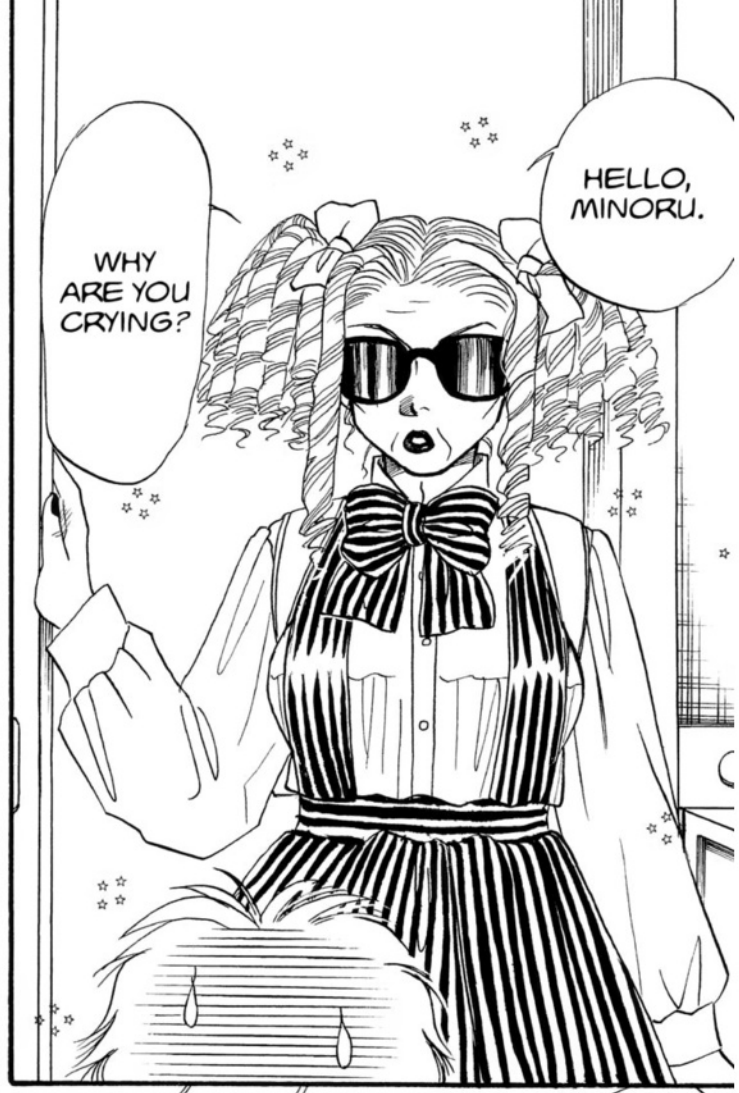

!
SWIK

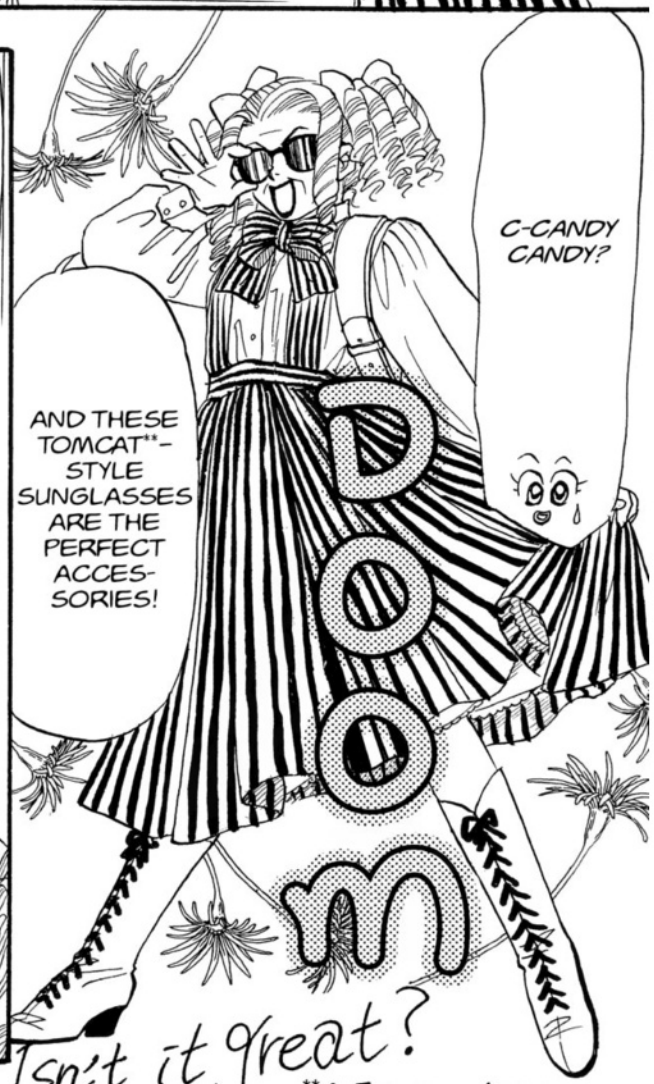
WOW...
SHE'S GOOD.
WAAAAH
STWAWBEWEE
SWUP

MY STWAW-BEWEE!
HA HA HA
IT LOOKS DELI-CIOUS! ♡
TOMP

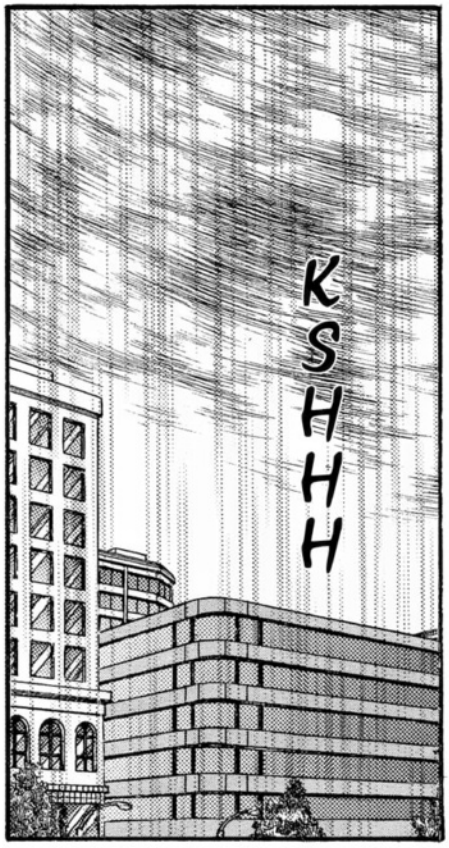
WIP
WIP
HUH?
WAS IT?
AHH... DAT WAS YUMMY!
PLOP
MUNCH
MUNCH
HA HA HA
IS THERE ANYTHING GOOD ON TV?
LET'S SEE...
WAAH
AAH !!
BWAZA !!
...
SOB
IS TOMOKO HERE?
KLAK

*A popular shojo manga from the 1970s.

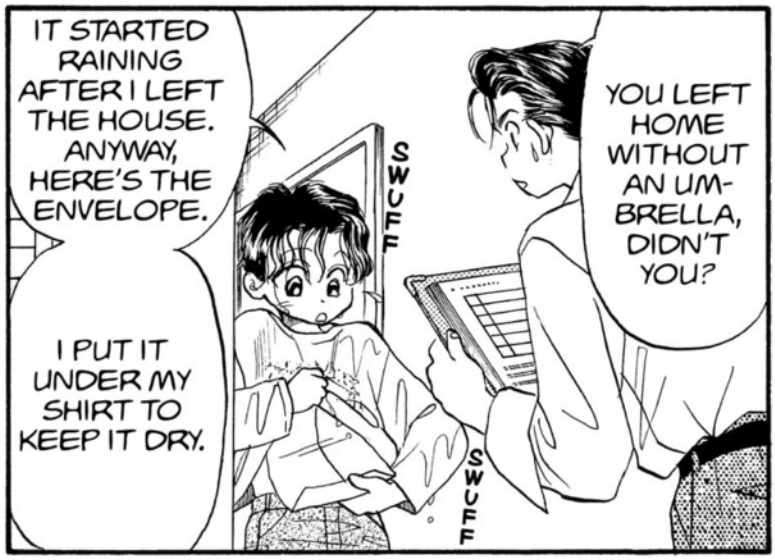




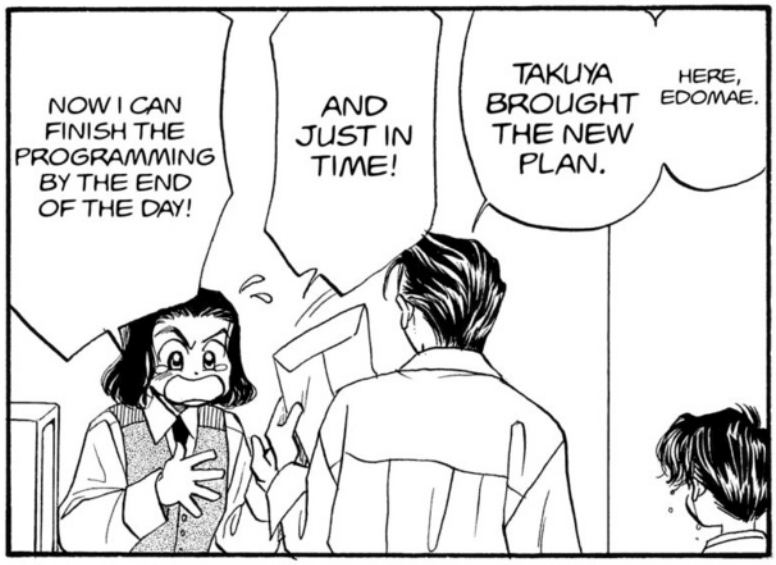
**A Japanese singer.

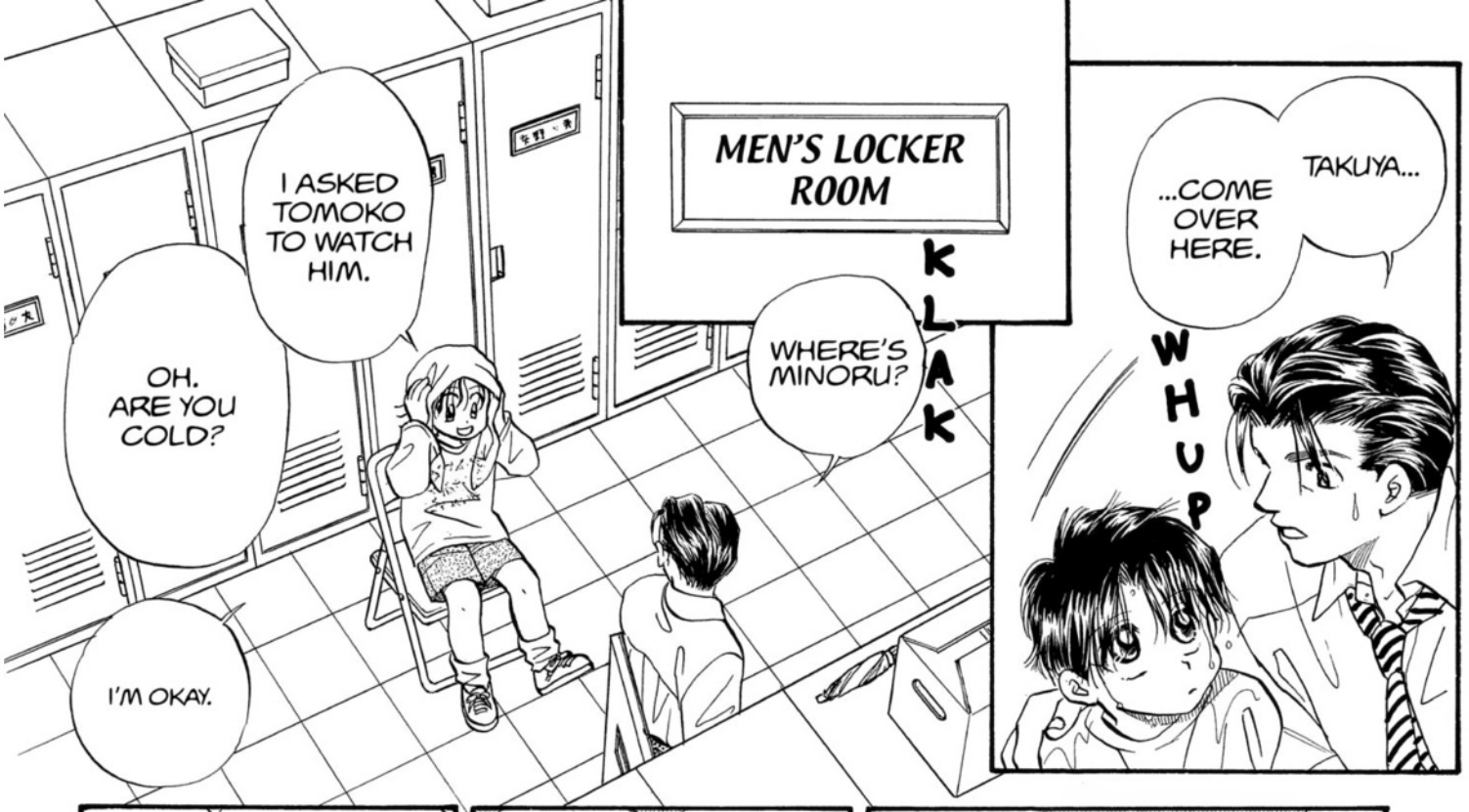

KSHHH

PLIP
PLIP
THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA RAIN.
TMP
TMP


IT STARTED RAINING AFTER I LEFT THE HOUSE. ANYWAY, HERE'S THE ENVELOPE.
I PUT IT UNDER MY SHIRT TO KEEP IT DRY.
SWUFF
SWUFF
YOU LEFT HOME WITHOUT AN UMBRELLA, DIDN'T YOU?

TAKUYA?
YOU'RE SOAKING WET!


NOW I CAN FINISH THE PROGRAMMING BY THE END OF THE DAY!
AND JUST IN TIME!
TAKUYA BROUGHT THE NEW PLAN.
HERE, EDOMAE.


MEN'S LOCKER ROOM
KLAK
I ASKED TOMOKO TO WATCH HIM.
OH. ARE YOU COLD?
I'M OKAY.
WHERE'S MINORU?
TAKUYA...
...COME OVER HERE.
WHUP

YOU CAN WEAR THIS.
THERE'S A DRYER IN THE SUPPLY ROOM. LET'S THROW YOUR CLOTHES IN IT.
OKAY.

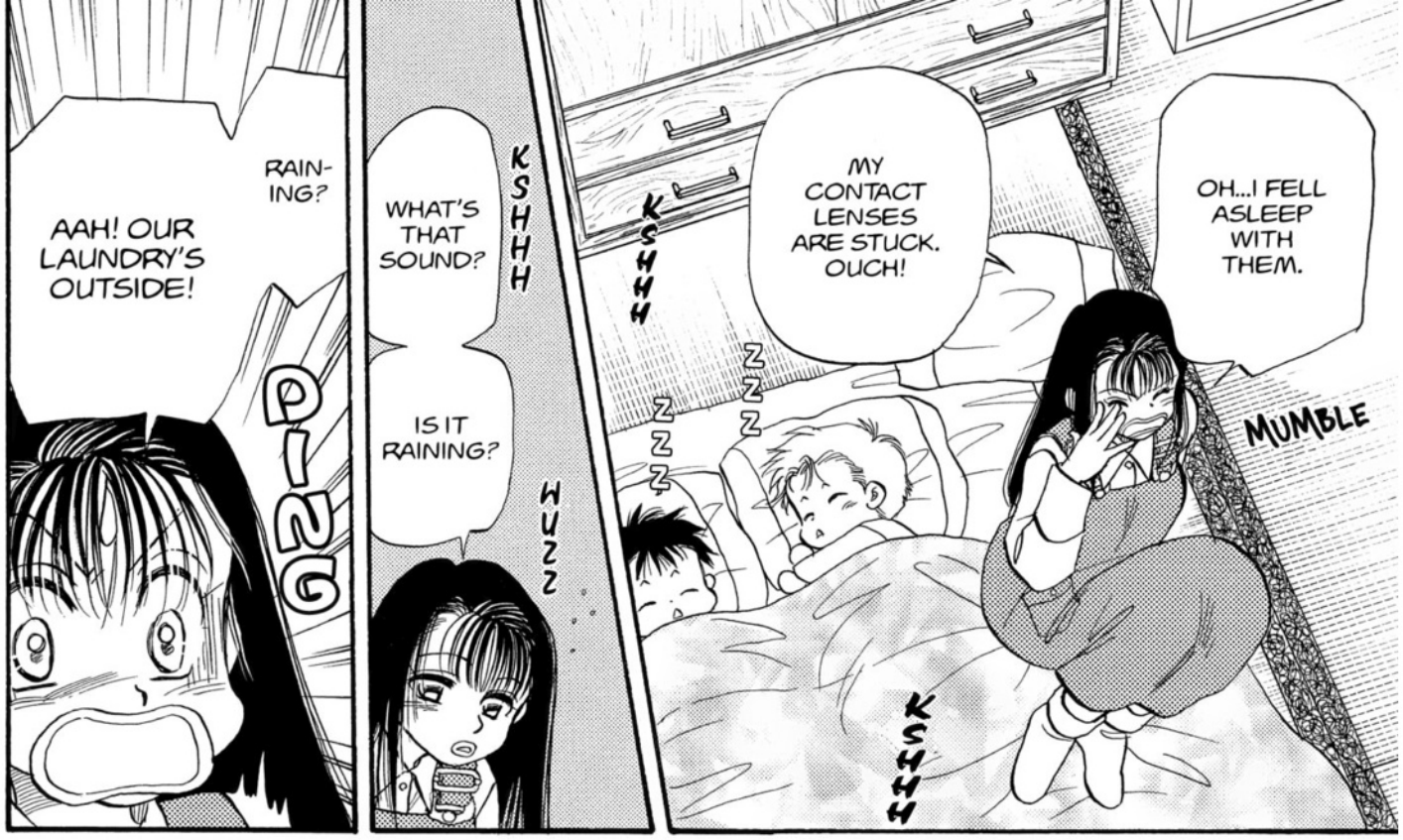
I'LL CALL HER.
BUT WHAT ABOUT TOMOKO?

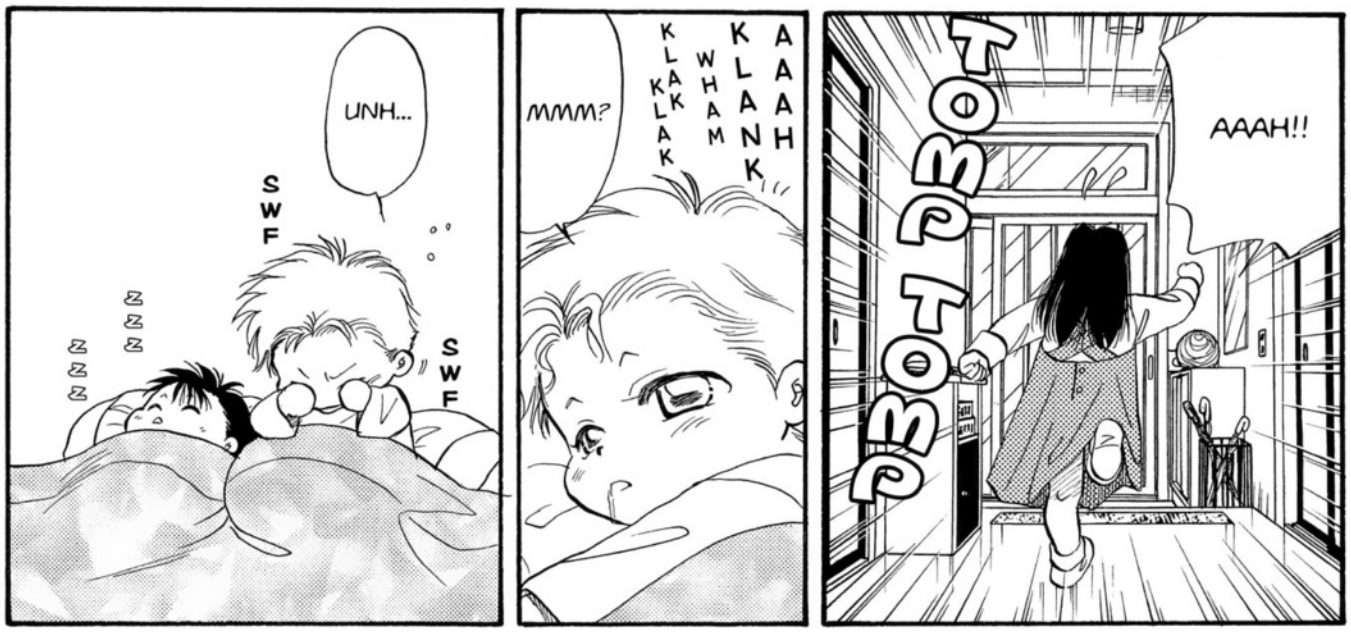
I'LL BE DONE WITH WORK IN ABOUT AN HOUR. WHY DON'T YOU WAIT FOR ME?
IT'S A LITTLE PAST THREE NOW.

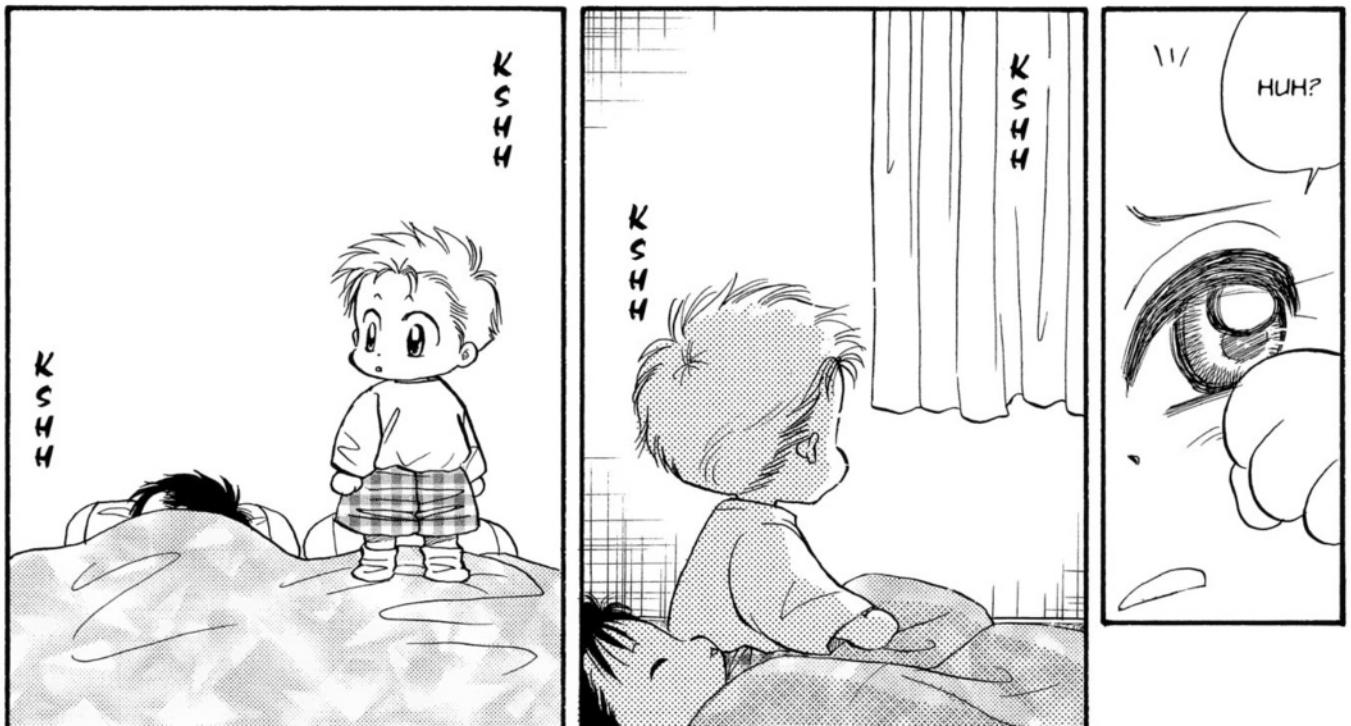
WE'LL GET SOME-THING FOR TOMOKO, TOO.
YOU BET.
REALLY?

AND TO SHOW MY APPRECI-ATION...
...I'LL BUY YOU A PARFAIT ON THE WAY HOME.
SWUFF
SWUFF

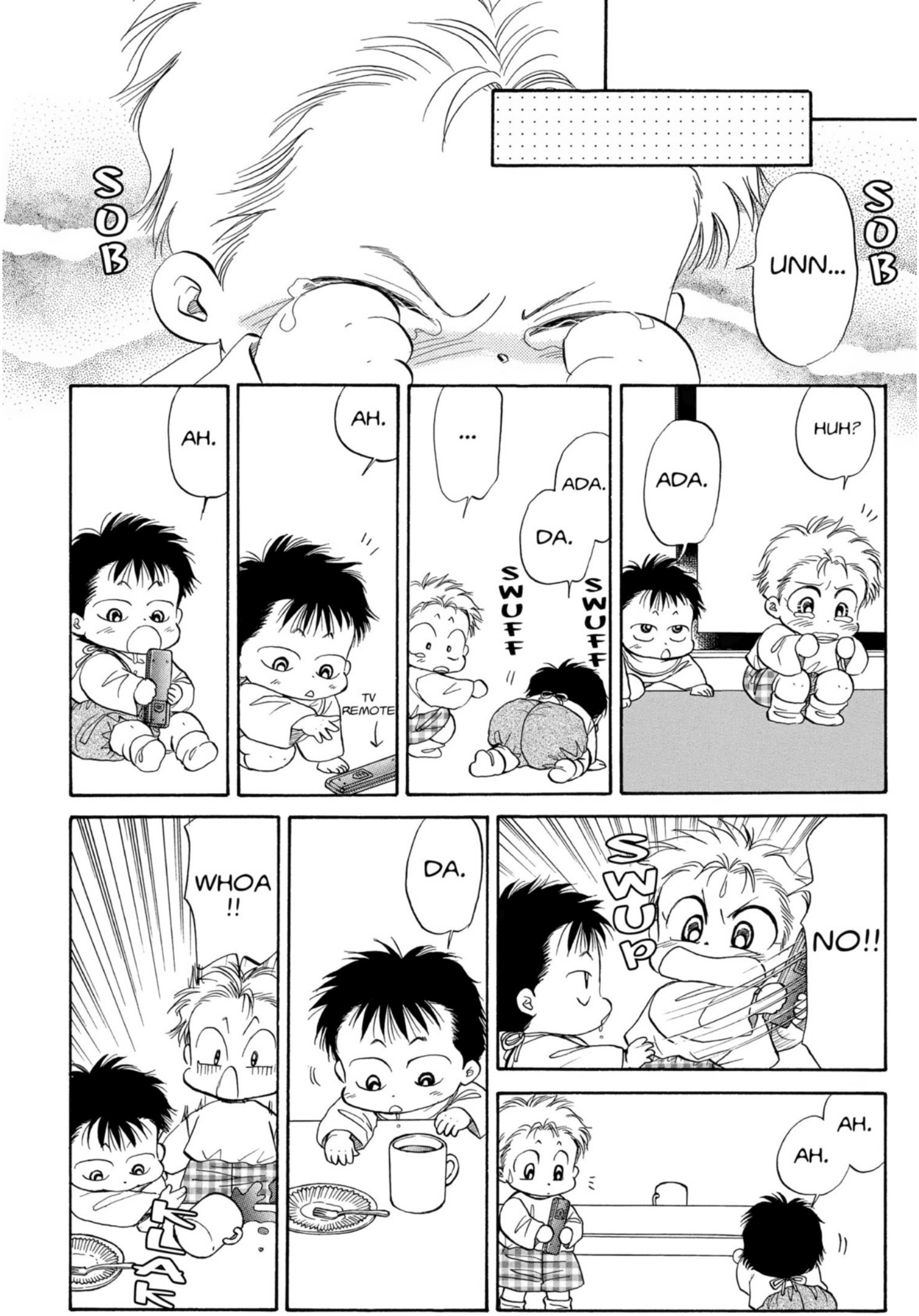
IT'S WEIRD WITHOUT MINORU AROUND.
UM...
WHAT'S THAT?
KLANK
IT'S LIKE GOING BACK IN TIME.
WHUP
WHUP
HA HA...
...
I'M AN ONLY CHILD AGAIN.
HUH?
KSHHH
KSHHH
...AND HE HARDLY DEMANDS ANY ATTENTION.
HE ALWAYS TAKES CARE OF MINORU...
UMPH
TOUCHED
WHAT'S WRONG?
HMM...

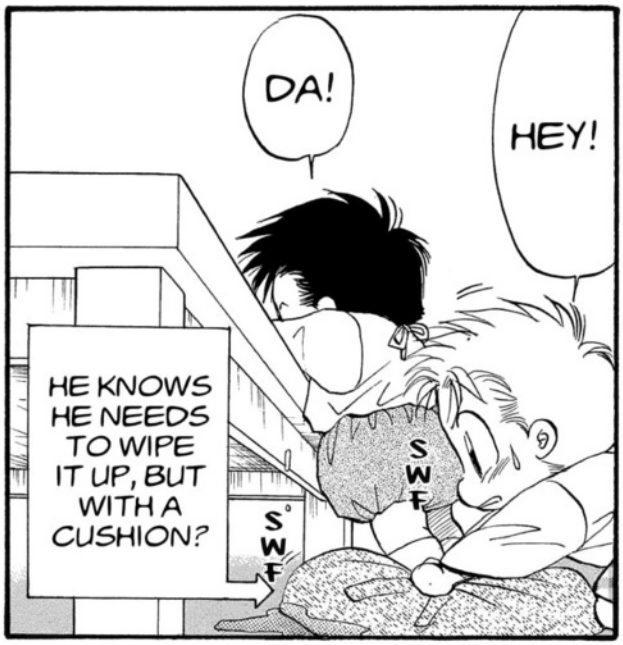

OH...I FELL ASLEEP WITH THEM.
MY CONTACT LENSES ARE STUCK. OUCH!
MUMBLE
KSHHH
ZZZZ
KSHHH
WHAT'S THAT SOUND?
KSHHH
IS IT RAINING?
WUZZ
RAIN-ING?
AAH! OUR LAUNDRY'S OUTSIDE!
DING


AAAH!!
TOMP TOMP TOMP
AAAH
KLANK
WHAM
KLAK
KLAK
MMM?
UNH...
SWF
SWF
ZZZ
ZZZ

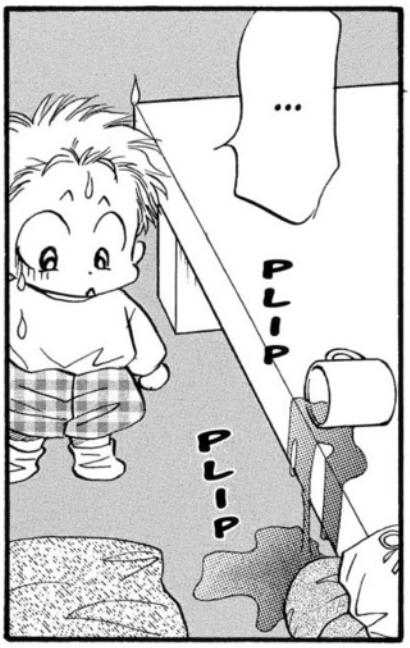

HUH?
KSHH
KSHH
KSHH
KSHH

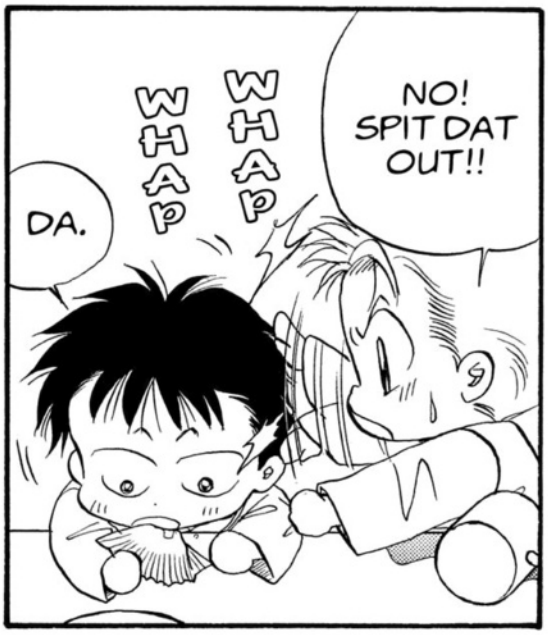
KSHH
TOMOCHA?
HE MEANS TOMOKO.
KLAK
...
BWAZA?
KSHH
KSHH
DADDY?
HUH?
RIZZZZ
RIZZZZ
RIZZ
AAH!
OH NO! IT'S SOAKED!
KSHH
UNH!
KSHH
HUH? SETSUKO?
HELLO, THIS IS KIMURA.
WOW!! IT'S BEEN SO LONG!!
NO SENSE OF TIME
YACK
YACK


SOB
SOB
UNN...
HUH?
ADA.
AH.
AH.
TV REMOTE
...
ADA.
DA.
SWUFF
SWUFF
WHOA !!
KLAK
DA.
SWUP
NO!!
AH.
AH.

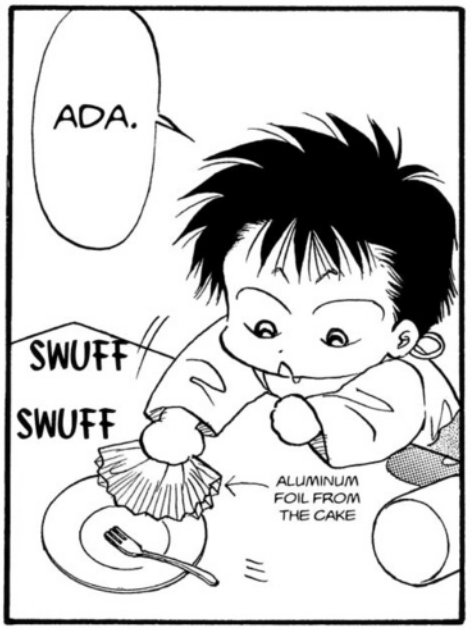

DA!
HEY!
HE KNOWS HE NEEDS TO WIPE IT UP, BUT WITH A CUSHION?
SWF
SWF

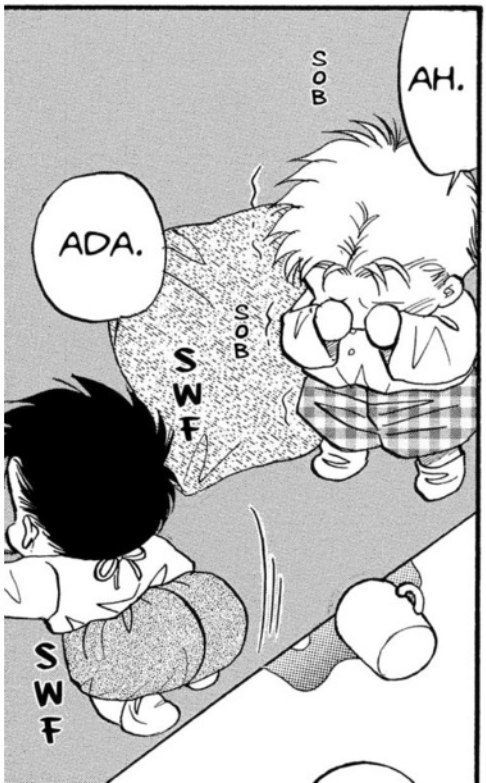
WIP
WIP

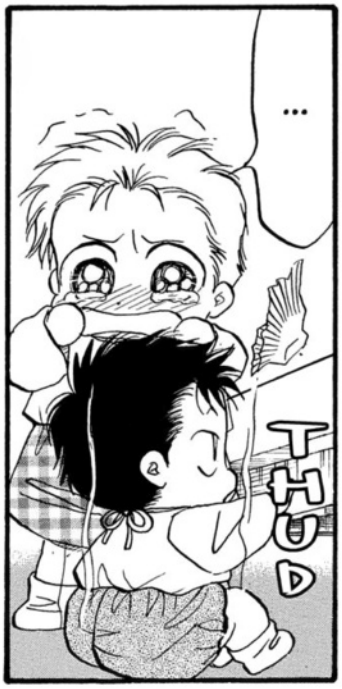

...
PLIP
PLIP

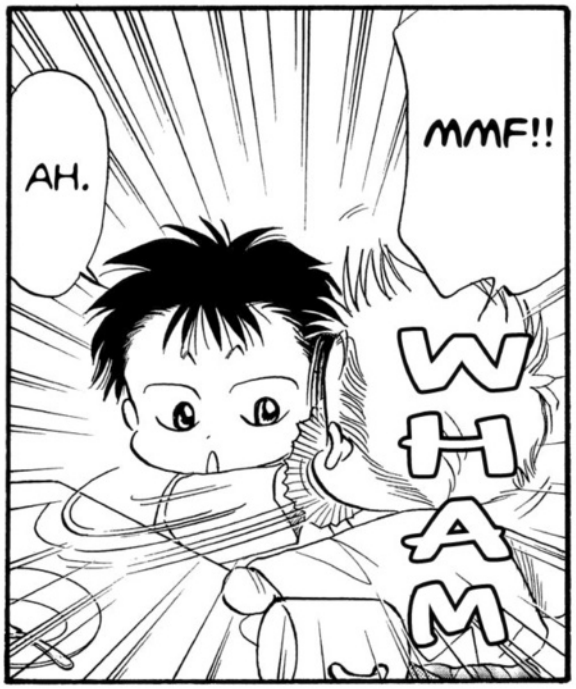

NO! SPIT DAT OUT!!
WHAP
WHAP
DA.

WHUP
CHOMP


ADA.
SWUFF
SWUFF
ALUMINUM FOIL FROM THE CAKE


AH.
SOB
ADA.
SOB
SWF
SWF


...
THUD

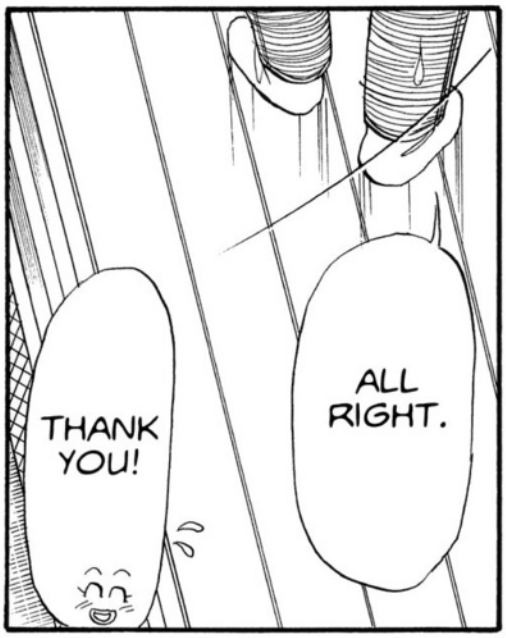

AH.
MMF!!
WHAM

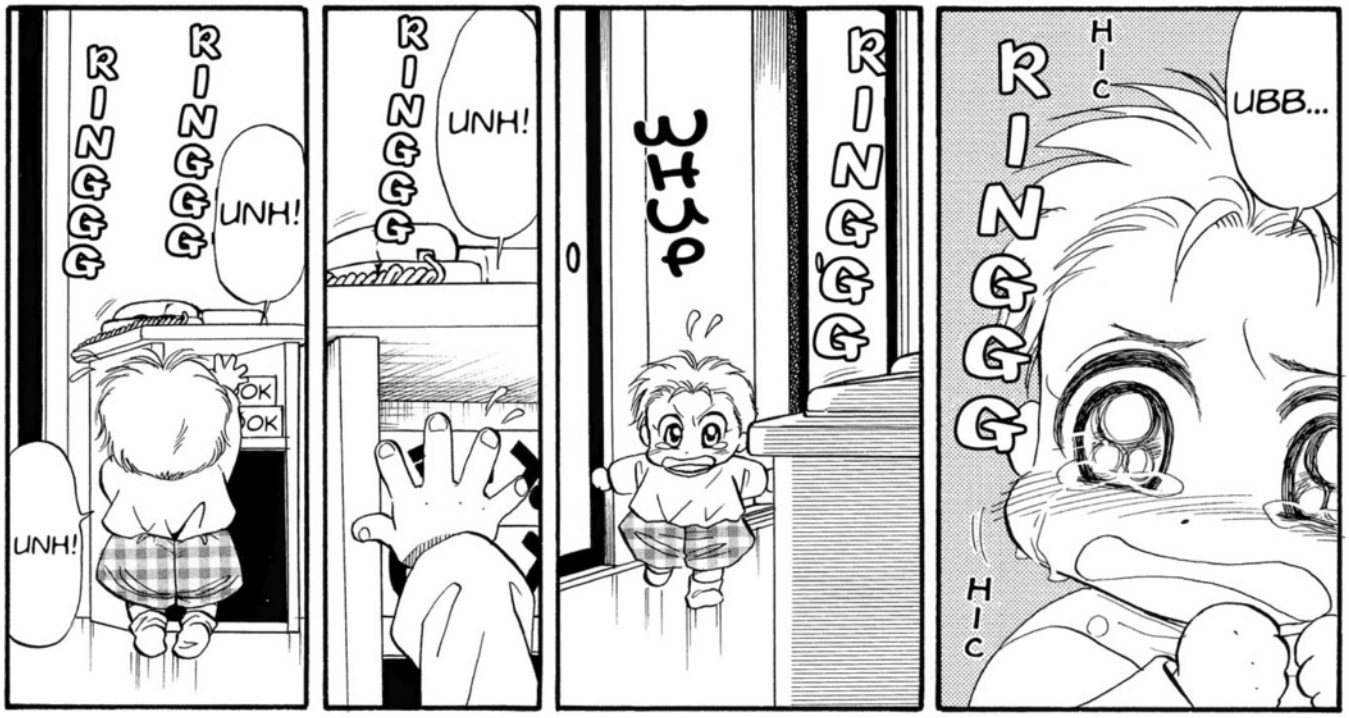
MOM? YOU HOME?
TMP
TMP
HELLO? TOMOKO?
DARN!
I GOT CAUGHT IN THE RAIN!
KSHH
KSHH
I'M HOME!
KLAK
OH, SEIICHI. YOUR TIMING'S PERFECT.
HUH?
UH...
HEY, TOMOKO.

TO THE ENOKIS'?
AREN'T HARUMI OR TAKUYA THERE?
I'M ON THE PHONE.
WILL YOU GO ACROSS THE STREET AND SEE HOW TAICHI AND MINORU ARE DOING?

RINGGG
RINGGG
JOLT
SOB
SOBS

KSHHH
ENOKI

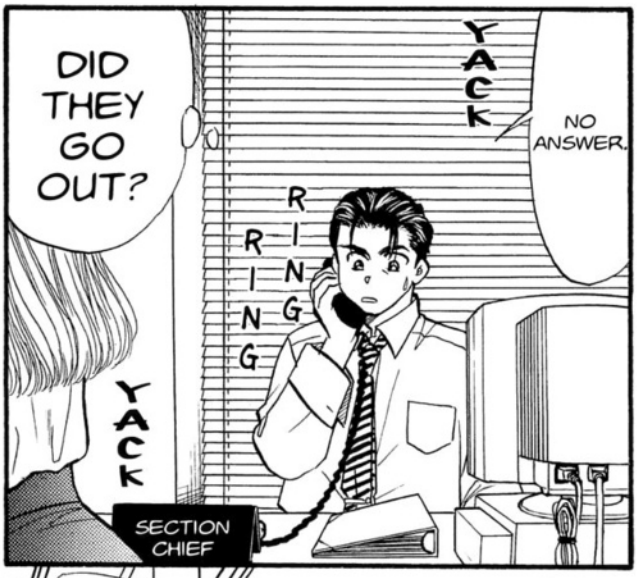

ALL RIGHT.
THANK YOU!

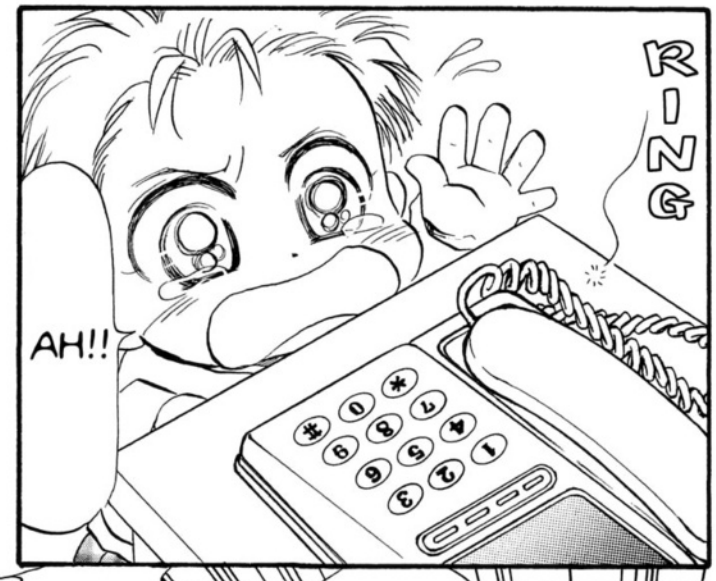

UBB...
HIC
RINGGG
HIC

RINGGG
HUP

RINGGG
UNH!

RINGGG
RINGGG
UNH!
UNH!


YACK
NO ANSWER.
RING
RING
DID THEY GO OUT?
YACK
SECTION CHIEF


RING
AH!!

KLUNK
BDMP
SOB
SOB

HEY!!
KLAKKA
DARN IT!
IT'S LOCKED !!
!!
KLAK
KLAK

WAHA
"YOU'RE A WOLF!"

HELLO! ARE YOU THERE?
...
WHAP
WHAP

WHAP
WHAP

UNLOCK THE DOOR, OKAY?
WHAP
HEY, MINORU!
WHAP

NO!!
IT'S ME, SEIICHI!

GO 'WAY! GO 'WAY!
OPEN THE DOOR!
DUMMY!

YO' NOT SEIICHI! YO' A WOOF!!
HUH? WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

CAN YOU UNLOCK THE DOOR?
OH, HEY! THERE YOU ARE.

PLUNK
LOOK AT MY FACE! IT'S ME!!

GRRR
LISTEN, MINORU. ISN'T THIS SEIICHI'S VOICE?
NO !!
DUMMY ?

YO' VOICE IS WUFF.
THE LITTLE ...

IT'S BWACK! SEIICHI GOTS A WHITE FACE!
SHUT UP!
KSHH

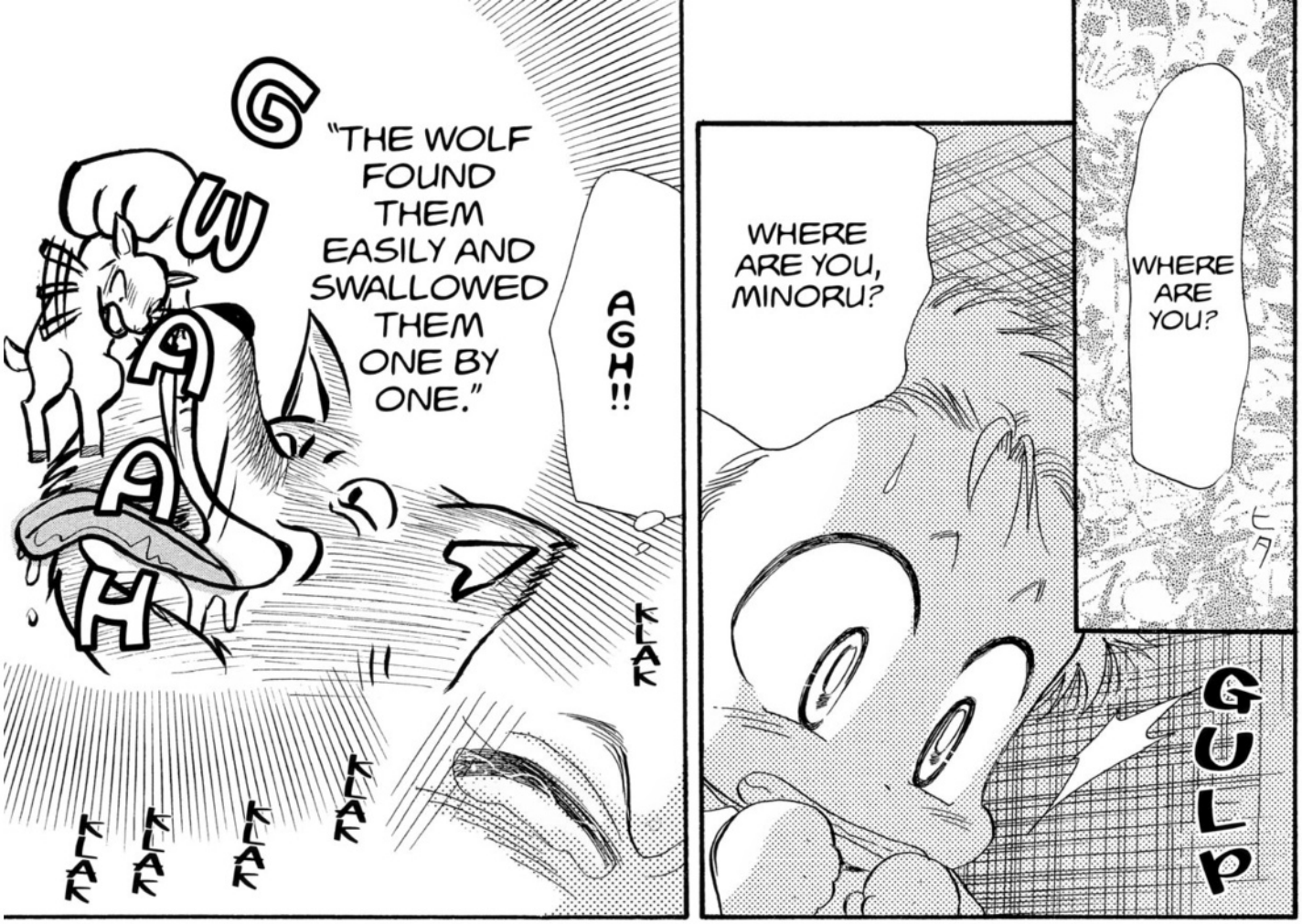
DE WOOF COME BACK! I HIDE!
OH!
OH!

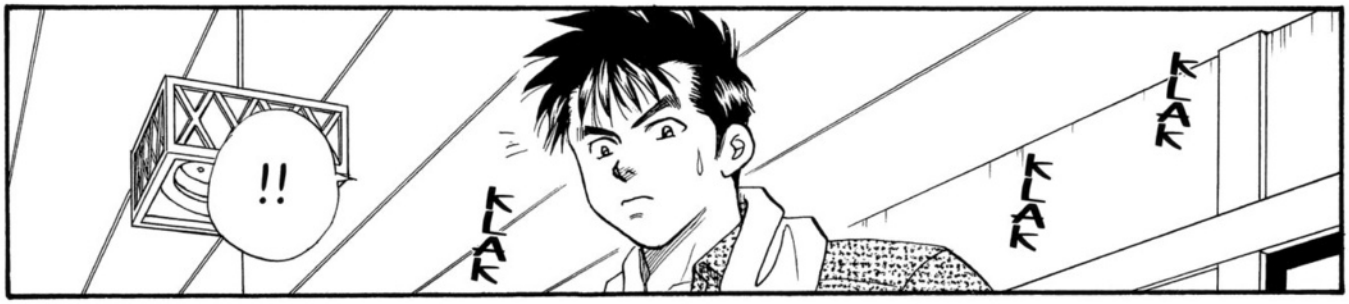
...

300T

THIS ISN'T WORKING. MAYBE TOMOKO HAS A KEY.
SHEESH.
KSHH
SPLISH
SPLISH

TOMOKO!!
HUH?
DON'T YOU HAVE A KEY?
AAAAH!!
TOMOKO? WHAT'S WRONG?
HA HA HA ...
I FORGOT TO GIVE IT TO YOU! SORRY.
BDMP
BDMP
HEH HEH HEH...
HERE I COME, MINORU...
YOU LITTLE RAT!
TMP TMP TMP
HELLO? TOMOKO?
LEFT ARM AND LEFT LEG BOTH GOING FORWARD.
I'M WORRIED.
TOMOKO? COME BACK!!
KLIK
CHAK
HEE HEE HEE HEE...
KREEEK
MINOORUUU...


"THE WOLF FOUND THEM EASILY AND SWALLOWED THEM ONE BY ONE."
AGH!!
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
WHERE ARE YOU, MINORU?
WHERE ARE YOU?
GULP


!!
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

HEY...
WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON?
SWUP
...
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN THERE, MINORU?

!!

WAAAAH

SEIICHI!! WHY ARE YOU SCARING THE CHILDREN?

SMASH

WAIT!! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!!

THEN WHY ARE THEY SO SCARED?

GRAH

GRAH

YAP YAP YAP YAP

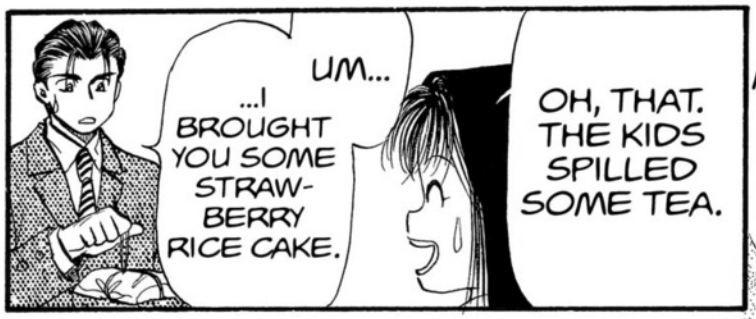
WHAT HAP-PENED ...

...TO YOUR HEAD?

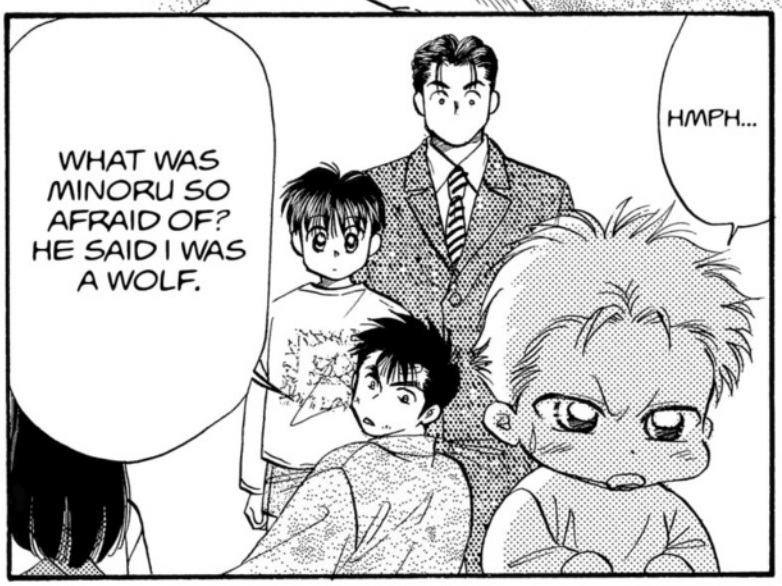
...

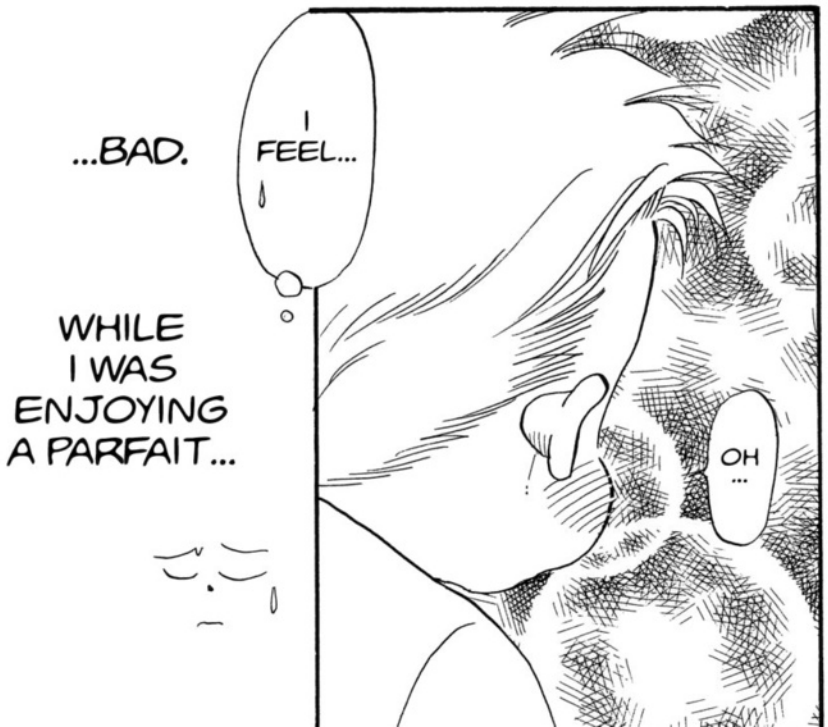
I TRIED TO CALL YOU. BY THE WAY, WHAT'S WITH THE NEWSPAPER UNDER THE CUSHION?
FIRST OF ALL, WHY DID EVERYBODY ABANDON MINORU?
HUH?

DON'T ASK.
BUT IT WAS ALL MINORU'S FAULT.


UM...
...I BROUGHT YOU SOME STRAW-BERRY RICE CAKE.
OH, THAT. THE KIDS SPILLED SOME TEA.

WHAT'S THAT? A CHIL-DREN'S STORY?
MAYBE IT WAS THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS.

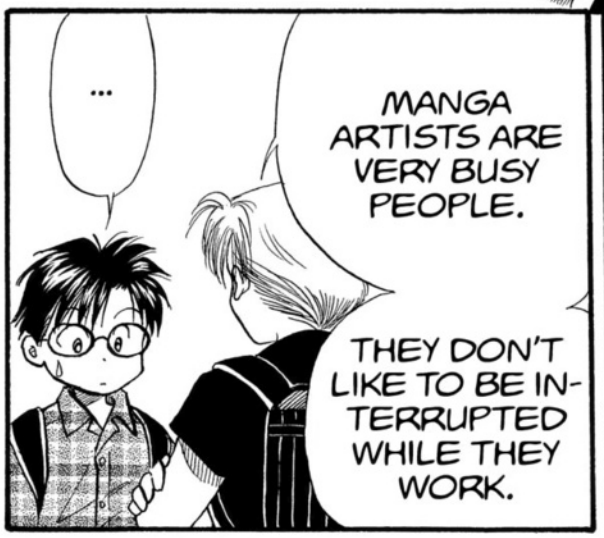

WHAT WAS MINORU SO AFRAID OF? HE SAID I WAS A WOLF.
HMPH...


...BAD.
I FEEL...
WHILE I WAS ENJOYING A PARFAIT...
OH ...

Chapter 84 / The End

Chapter 85

HIROSEY!♡
HIROSEY?
YOU'RE IN CLASS TWO, RIGHT?
RIGHT! I'M HITOSHI MORI-GUCHI.
YACK
YACK


MANGA ARTISTS ARE VERY BUSY PEOPLE.
THEY DON'T LIKE TO BE IN-TERRUPTED WHILE THEY WORK.
...

YOU THINK I COULD SEE WHERE HE WORKS SOMETIME?

I HEAR YOUR FATHER'S A MANGA ARTIST.

BEFORE A DEADLINE, MY DAD'S EXTREMELY BUSY. HE BARELY TAKES TIME TO EAT OR SLEEP.

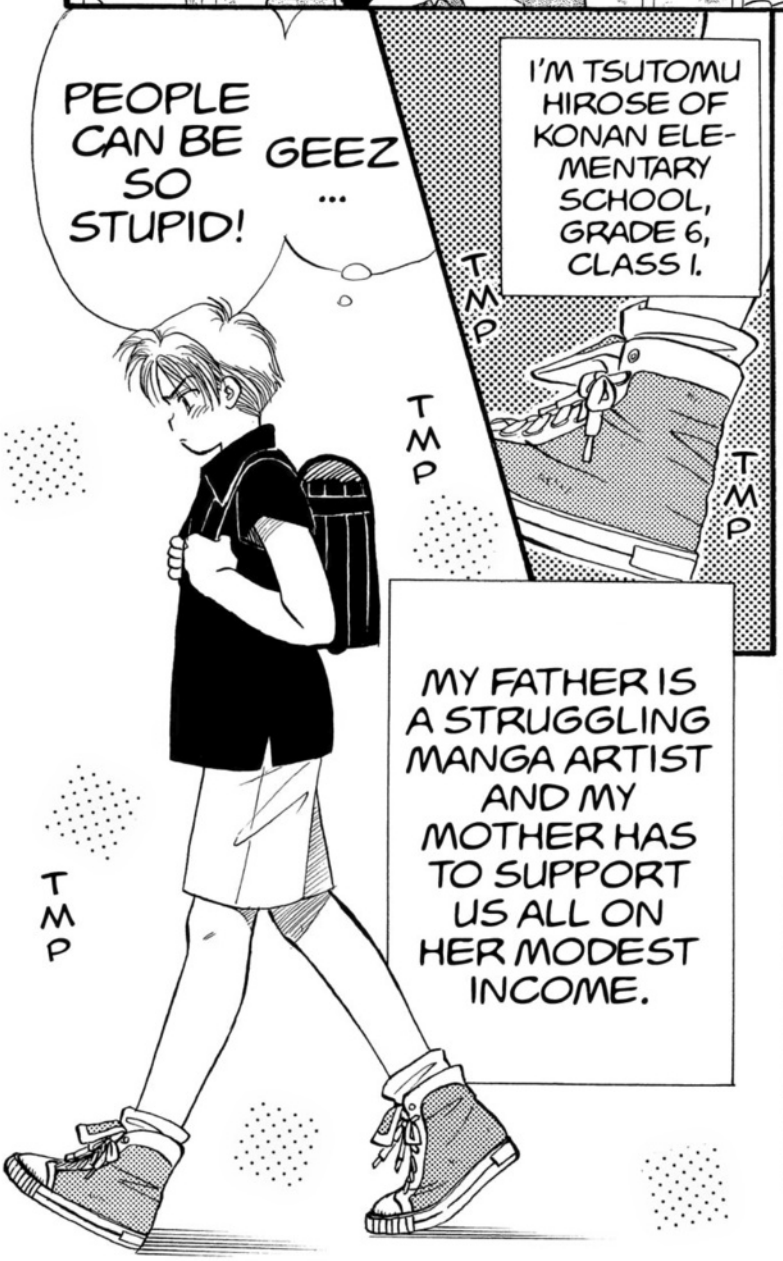
IT'S A BATTLE AGAINST TIME AND EVERY SECOND COUNTS.

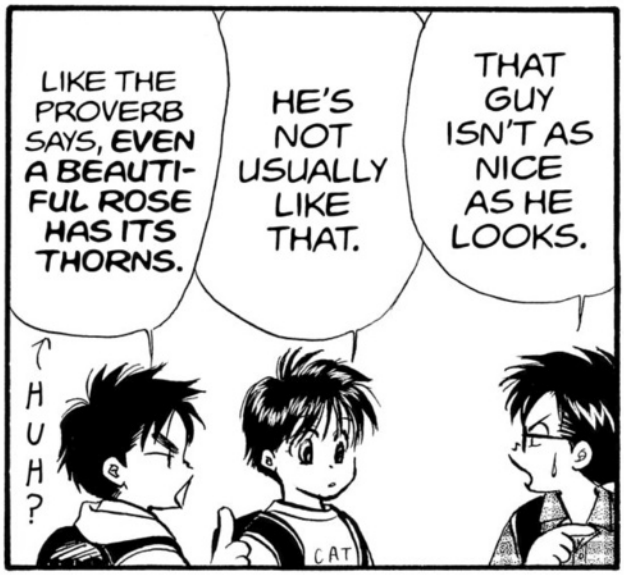
HUH?
ARE YOU CRAZY?

WAH!!
AND YOU EXPECT HIM TO MAKE TIME FOR YOU?

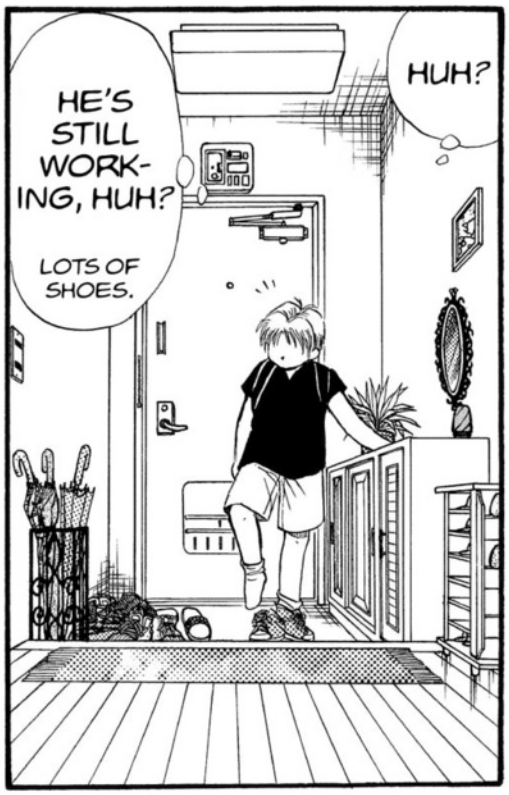
HMPH!!
YACK
WIP
TOMPITOMP
YACK
...

GEEZ! WHAT A GROUCH!
...
WERE YOU TALKING TO HIROSE, HITOSHI?
CAT


I'M TSUTOMU HIROSE OF KONAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 6, CLASS 1.
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
GEEZ ...
PEOPLE CAN BE SO STUPID!
MY FATHER IS A STRUGGLING MANGA ARTIST AND MY MOTHER HAS TO SUPPORT US ALL ON HER MODEST INCOME.


THAT GUY ISN'T AS NICE AS HE LOOKS.
HE'S NOT USUALLY LIKE THAT.
LIKE THE PROVERB SAYS, EVEN A BEAUTIFUL ROSE HAS ITS THORNS.
HUH?
CAT

WASN'T HE SUPPOSED TO FINISH THE MANUSCRIPT BY LUNCHTIME?
SWF
SWF


HE'S STILL WORKING, HUH?
LOTS OF SHOES.
HUH?

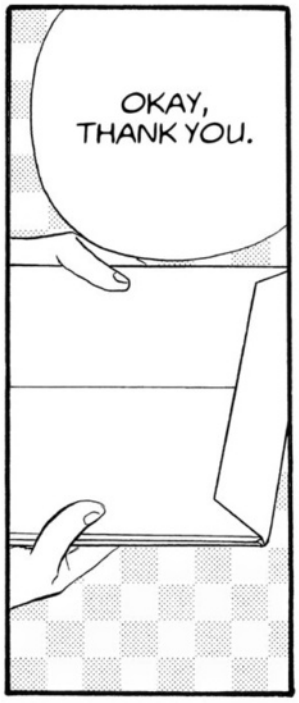
CHAK
I'M HOME.

!!
SLAM
TSUTOMU! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!!

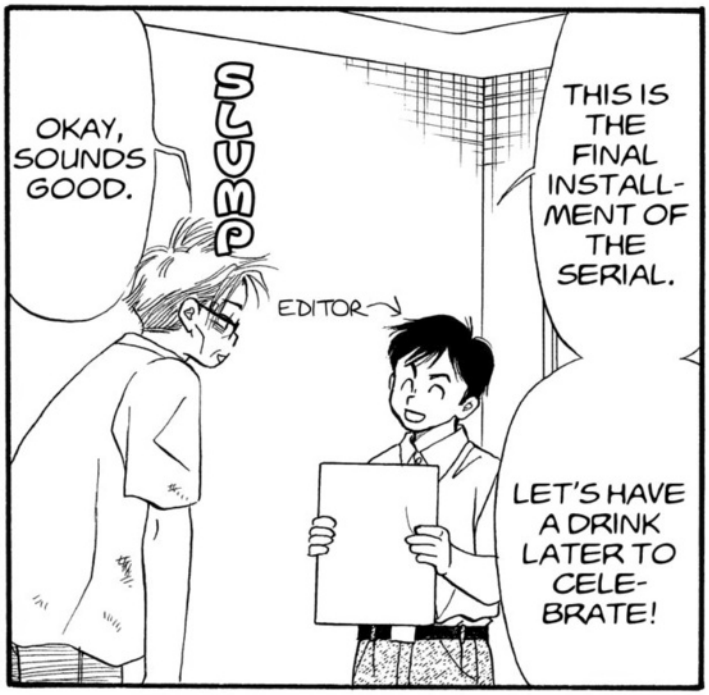
I GOT THEM TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE TO THIS EVENING, BUT I'M STILL NOT GONNA MAKE IT!!
...WORKING HARD ON A SHORT-TERM MANGA SERIAL FOR A MAGAZINE.
PLEASE!!

RIGHT NOW MY FATHER IS...
AGAIN?

I NEED YOU TO HELP ME! PLEASE!!
WH-WHAT?



SEVERAL HOURS LATER...



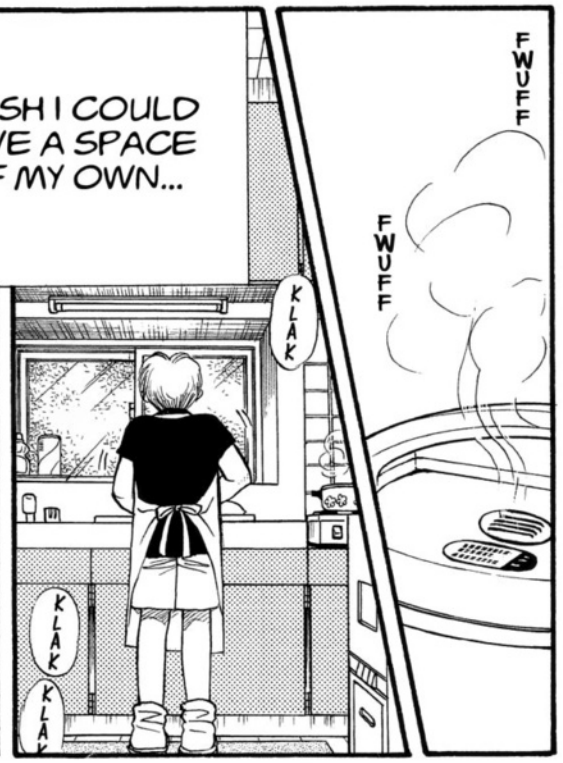
THERE IS ONE THING I WANT.
HMM...

WILL YOU WAKE ME UP JUST BEFORE YOU WAKE THEM?
AND COULD YOU FIX DINNER TOO?
...
YAWN

THEY ALL PASSED OUT.
THEY TOLD ME TO WAKE THEM UP AROUND TEN SO THEY WOULDN'T MISS THE LAST TRAIN.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO SLEEP TOO, DAD?
YEAH.

I'D LIKE...
SLURP

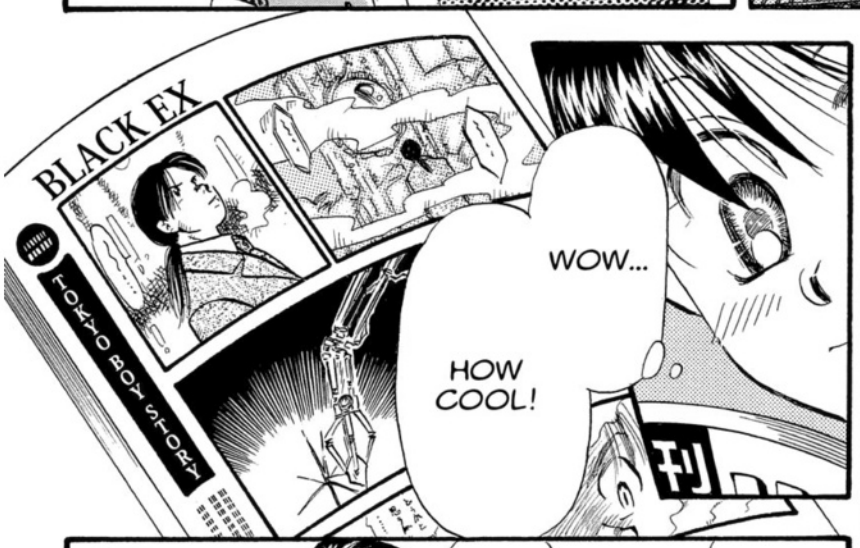
I WISH I COULD HAVE A SPACE OF MY OWN...
...EVEN IF IT WERE JUST THE LIVING ROOM.
THERE.

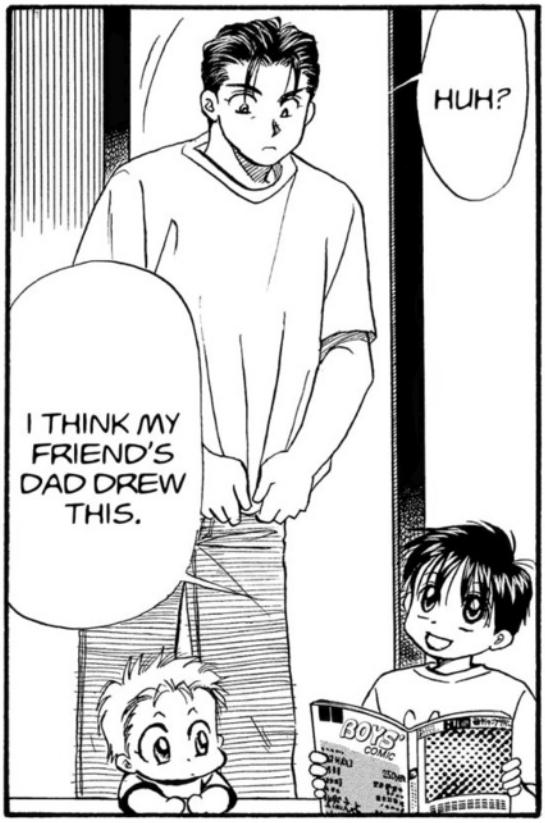

FWUFF
FWUFF
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

BUT CAN WE AFFORD IT?
Dad's manga don't bring in much money. After he pays his assistants, there's hardly anything left for us.

...MY OWN DESK.

I KNOW THIS ARTIST!
HEY!
BOYS' COMIC
週刊 サタデー


BLACK EX
TOKYO BOY STORY
WOW...
HOW COOL!

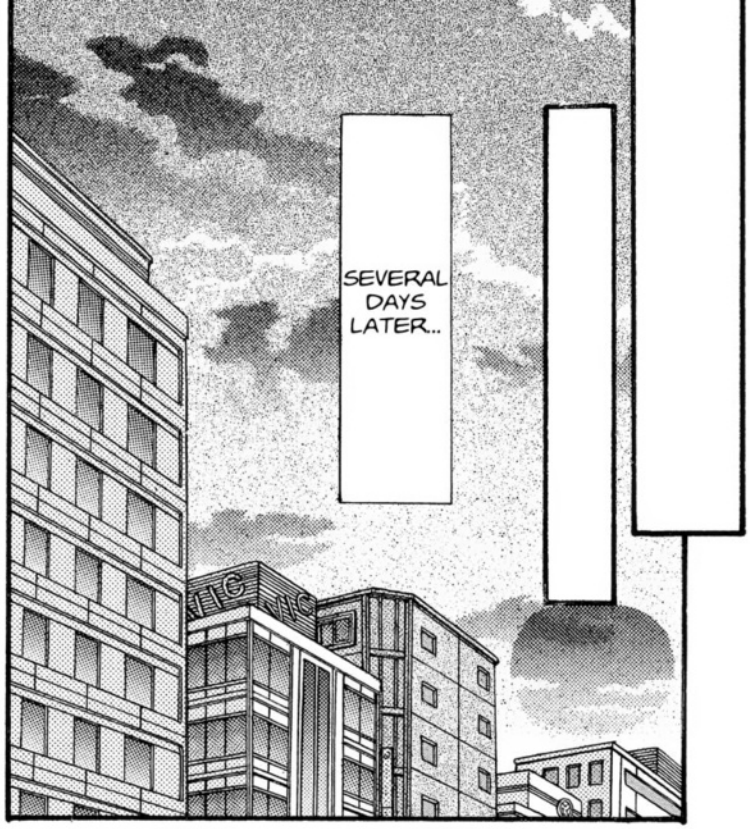

HUH?
I THINK MY FRIEND'S DAD DREW THIS.
BOYS' COMIC

DADDY, PICK ME UP.
HUH?
IS THIS ANY GOOD, DAD?

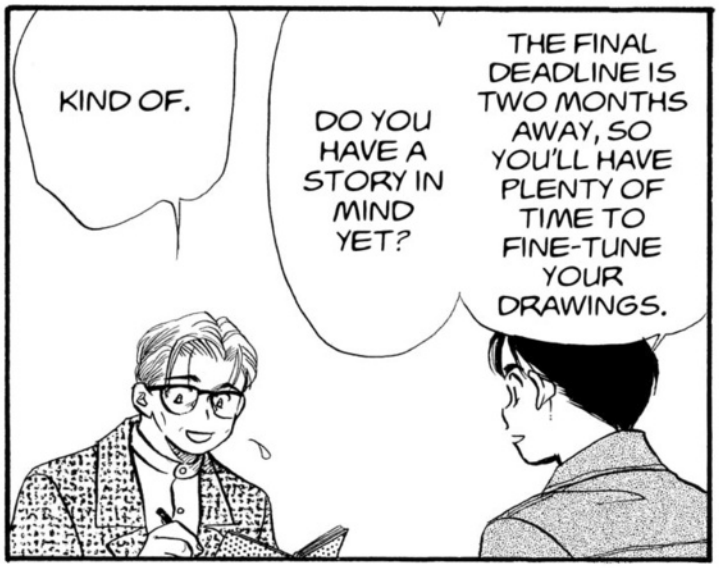
"ENTER THE FATHER."
Enter the Father
Enter the Father

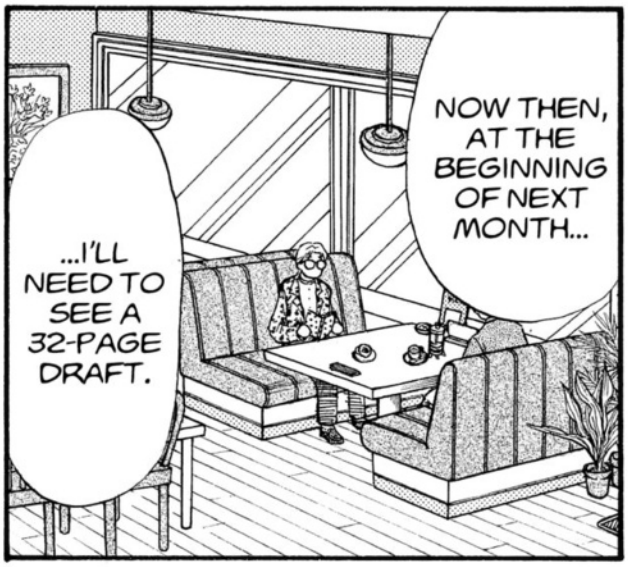
ALL I READ WAS "ENTER THE FATHER."
I DON'T KNOW.
HUH? WHY NOT?
GECKO
BOYS' COMIC

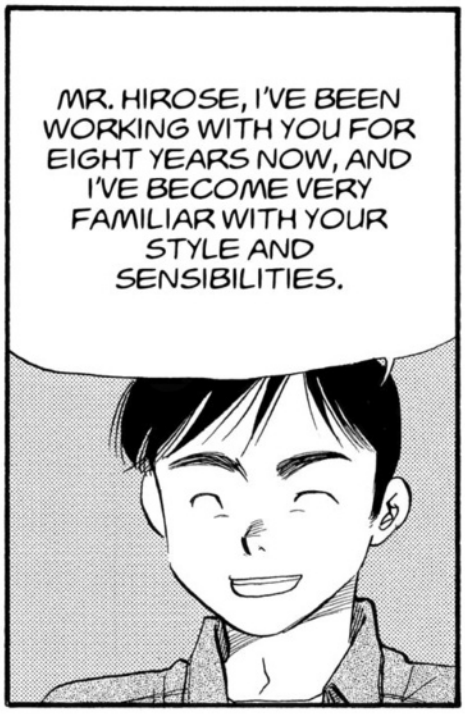
I HAVEN'T READ IT.
I DON'T KNOW.
MINORU

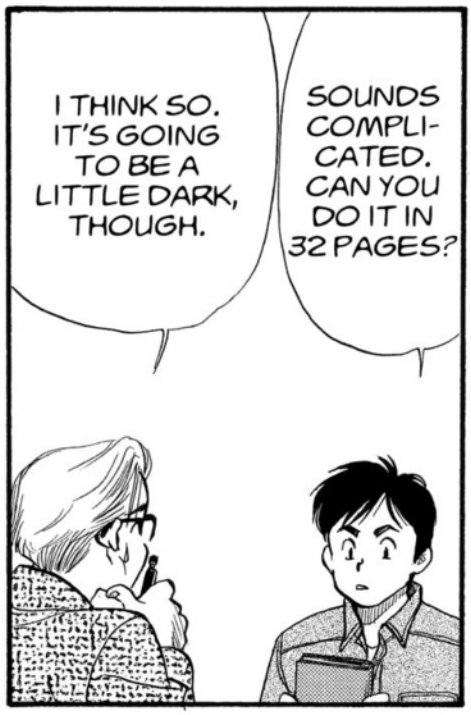

SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

SEE? ISN'T IT FUNNY?
HA HA HA...
Has no idea what he's laughing at
HA HA HA HA
WA-WA-WOOO
BOYS' COMIC
250 yen

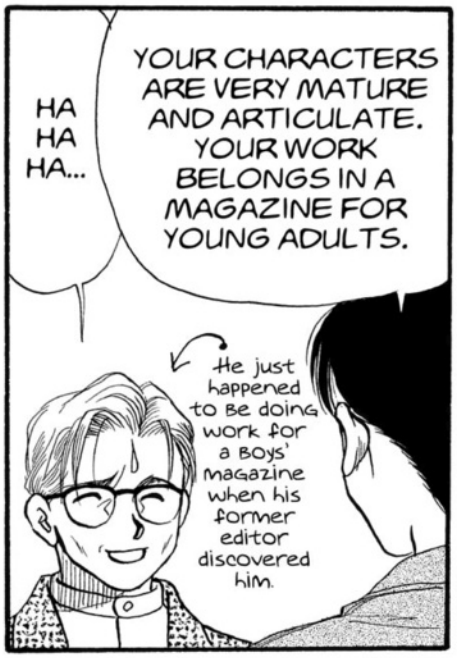

KIND OF.
DO YOU HAVE A STORY IN MIND YET?
THE FINAL DEADLINE IS TWO MONTHS AWAY, SO YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO FINE-TUNE YOUR DRAWINGS.


NOW THEN, AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT MONTH...
...I'LL NEED TO SEE A 32-PAGE DRAFT.

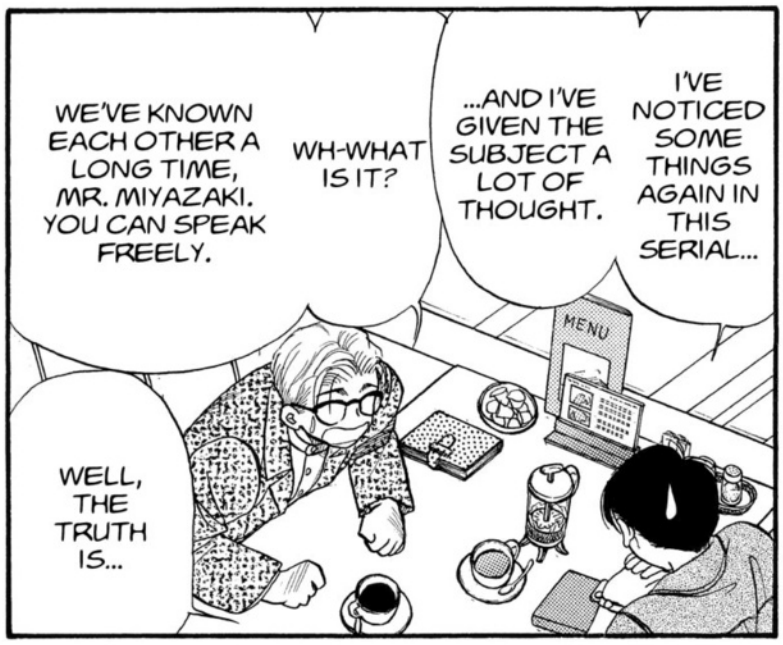

MR. HIROSE, I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH YOU FOR EIGHT YEARS NOW, AND I'VE BECOME VERY FAMILIAR WITH YOUR STYLE AND SENSIBILITIES.


SOUNDS COMPLI-CATED. CAN YOU DO IT IN 32 PAGES?
I THINK SO. IT'S GOING TO BE A LITTLE DARK, THOUGH.

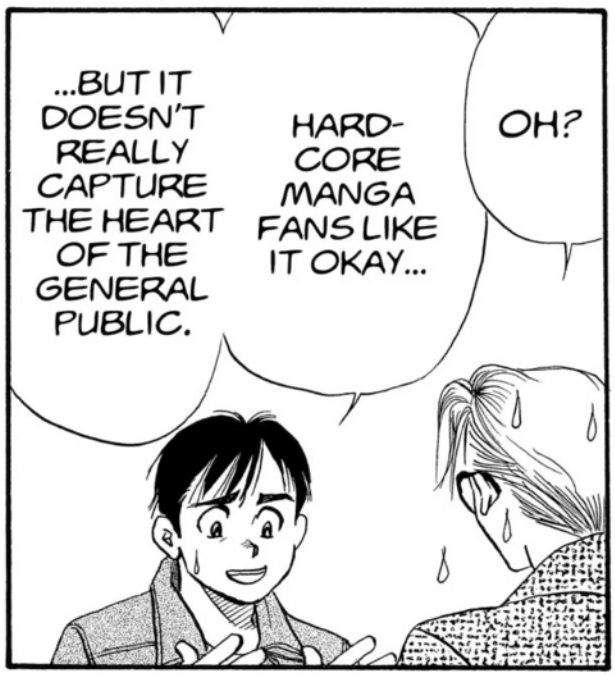
WHAT GENRE?
IT'S SORT OF AN ACTION-SUSPENSE STORY ABOUT A CHILD WHO GETS INTO TROUBLE BECAUSE OF AN INHERITANCE.

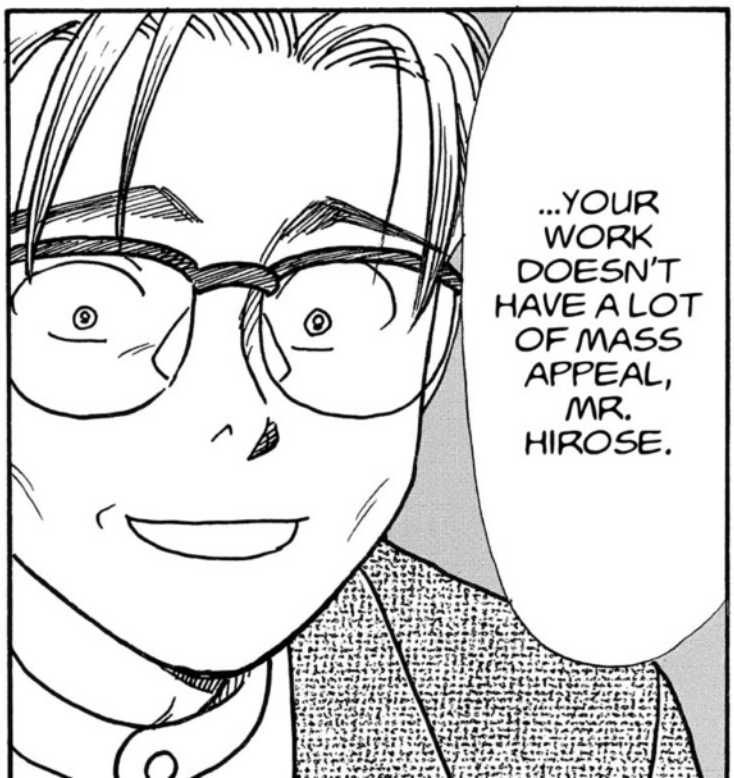

HA HA HA...
YOUR CHARACTERS ARE VERY MATURE AND ARTICULATE. YOUR WORK BELONGS IN A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG ADULTS.
He just happened to be doing work for a boys' magazine when his former editor discovered him.

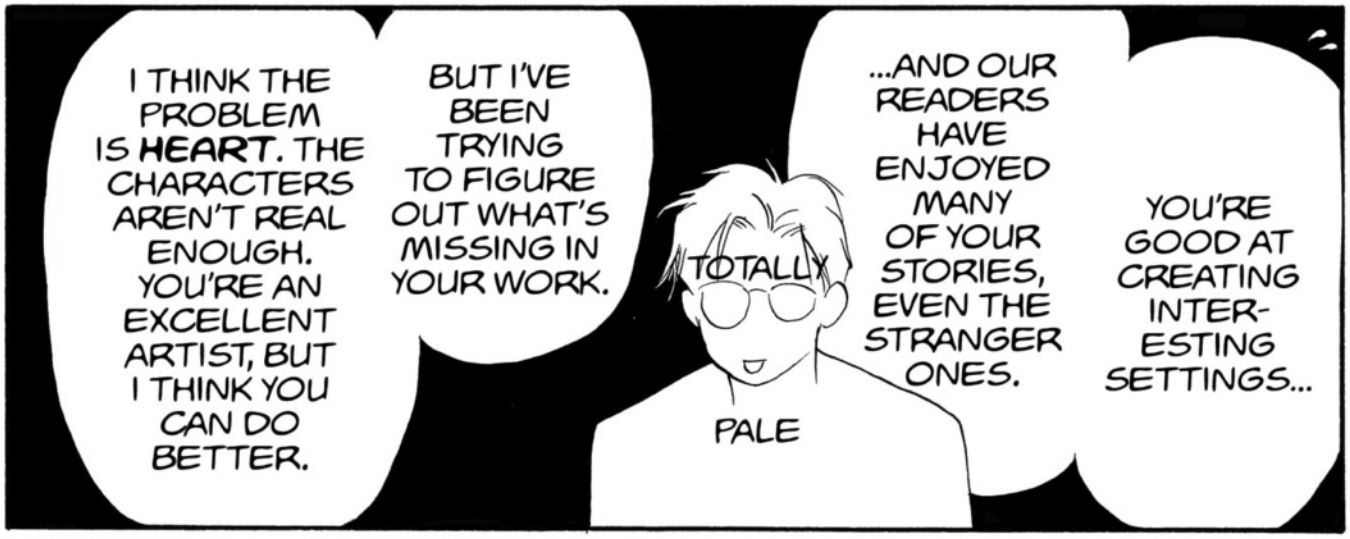
YOUR STYLE IS A BIT... OFFBEAT.
YES. ARTISTS HAVE STYLES THAT READ-ERS CAN BECOME ATTACHED TO.
YOU HAVE?

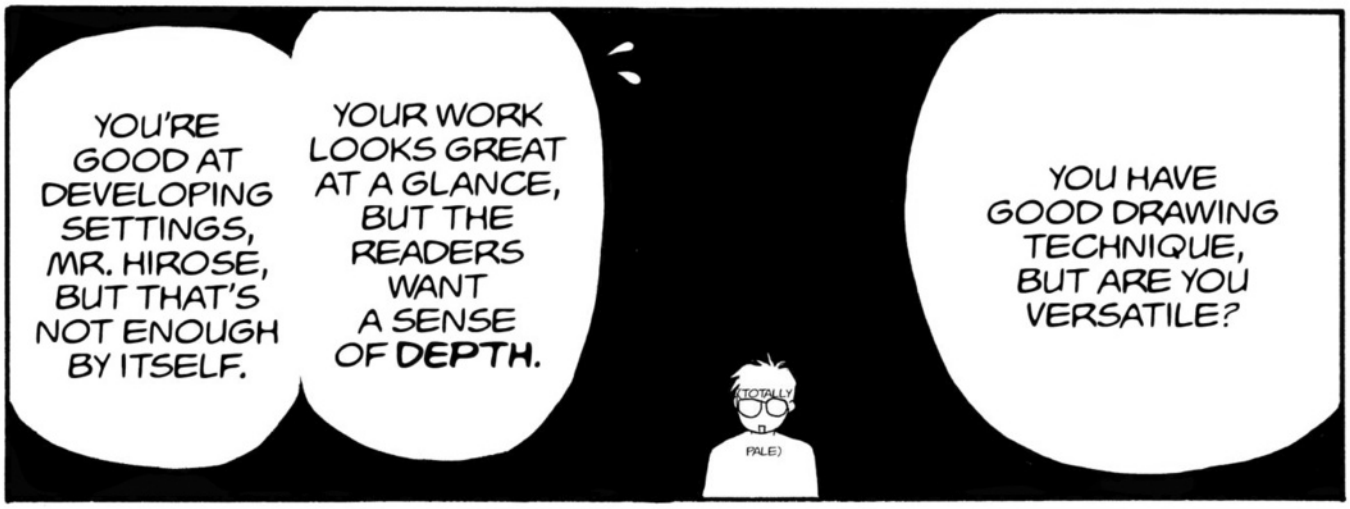

WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER A LONG TIME, MR. MIYAZAKI. YOU CAN SPEAK FREELY.
WH-WHAT IS IT?
...AND I'VE GIVEN THE SUBJECT A LOT OF THOUGHT.
I'VE NOTICED SOME THINGS AGAIN IN THIS SERIAL...
MENU
WELL, THE TRUTH IS...

YES?
THIS ISN'T EASY FOR ME TO SAY...
...BUT MAYBE I SHOULD'VE STEPPED IN BEFORE NOW.

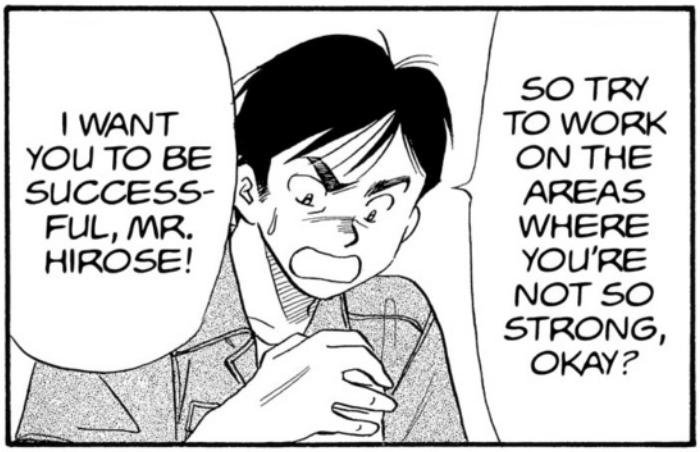

...BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY CAPTURE THE HEART OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.
HARD-CORE MANGA FANS LIKE IT OKAY...
OH?


...YOUR WORK DOESN'T HAVE A LOT OF MASS APPEAL, MR. HIROSE.


I THINK THE PROBLEM IS **HEART**. THE CHARACTERS AREN'T REAL ENOUGH. YOU'RE AN EXCELLENT ARTIST, BUT I THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER.
BUT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S MISSING IN YOUR WORK.
TOTALLY
PALE
...AND OUR READERS HAVE ENJOYED MANY OF YOUR STORIES, EVEN THE STRANGER ONES.
YOU'RE GOOD AT CREATING INTER-ESTING SETTINGS...


YOU'RE GOOD AT DEVELOPING SETTINGS, MR. HIROSE, BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF.
YOUR WORK LOOKS GREAT AT A GLANCE, BUT THE READERS WANT A SENSE OF **DEPTH**.
TOTALLY
PALE
YOU HAVE GOOD DRAWING TECHNIQUE, BUT ARE YOU VERSATILE?

AH!! HE TURNED TO ASH!!
SWF
ASH
SWF
M-MR. HIROSE?

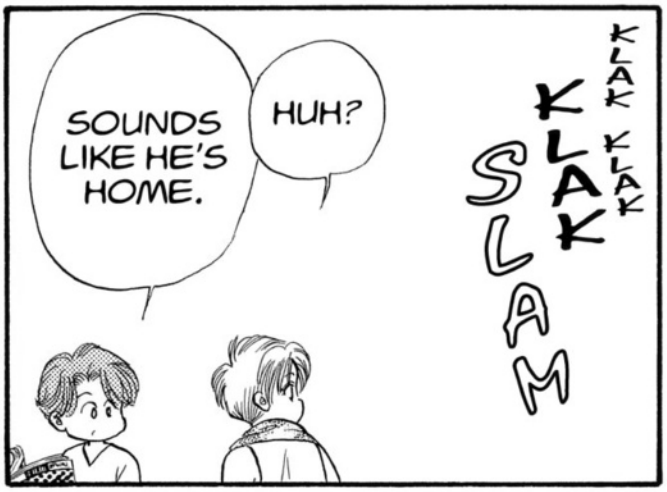

I WANT YOU TO BE SUCCESS-FUL, MR. HIROSE!
SO TRY TO WORK ON THE AREAS WHERE YOU'RE NOT SO STRONG, OKAY?

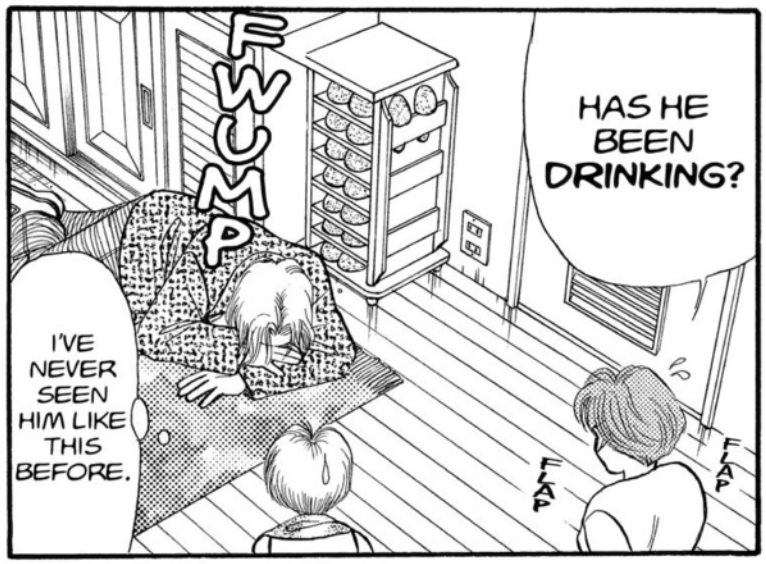
DO YOU UNDER-STAND, MR. HIROSE?
AND I HOPE YOUR NEXT MANGA WILL HAVE A CHILD CHARAC-TER IN IT.

SHE SUPPORTS DAD'S CAREER, BUT SHE DOESN'T SHOW MUCH INTEREST IN IT.

MOM DOESN'T KNOW **ANYTHING** ABOUT MANGA.

HI, DAD.
WHUP


SOUNDS LIKE HE'S HOME.
HUH?
KLAK KLAK
KLAK
SLAM


HAS HE BEEN DRINKING?
FWUMP
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS BEFORE.
FLAP
FLAP

HE DID?
MY EDITOR SAID IT WASN'T BAD, BUT IT WASN'T GOOD EITHER!
PLUP
PLUP

YOU KNOW THAT SERIAL I'VE BEEN DRAWING?
YES?
JUNKO...

...
SOB
SO MY NEXT STORY'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING SPECIAL...OR ELSE!!
SOB

HEY, TSUTOMU.
I'M HOME!
FWUP
FWUP
DRUNK

HE WORKS AT HIS DESK DAY AFTER DAY...
...AND HE NEVER GETS TIRED OF IT.
HE LOVES TO DRAW SO MUCH...
...BUT I GUESS IT'S NOT EASY WHEN YOUR HOBBY IS ALSO YOUR JOB.
HMPH
SOB
SOB

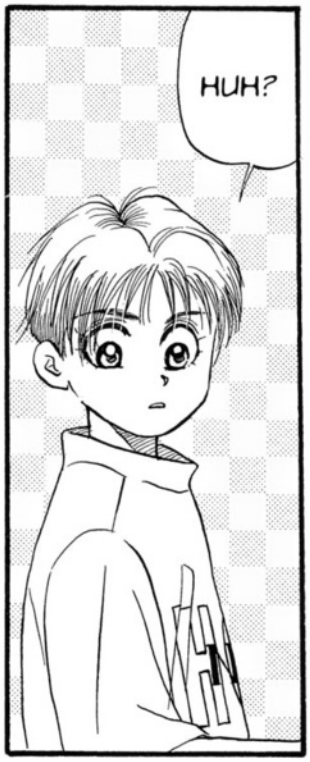
HELP ME GET YOUR FATHER TO BED!
HE PASSED OUT.
ZZZ
TSUTOMU!
HUH?

WOW!
THAT GROUCH HIROSE'S DAD DID THIS MANGA!!
KNOCK
KNOCK
BOYS' COMIC 250 Yen
小学校

THROB
HE'S A REALLY GOOD ARTIST.
WHOA...
THROB

DON'T WORRY.
WUMP

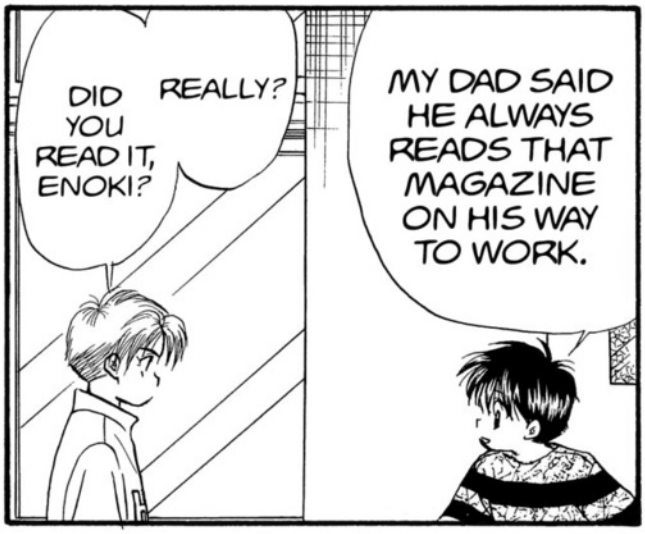
OKAY, BUT HIDE IT BEFORE ONE OF THE TEACHERS SEES IT.
I WENT TO BUY IT, BUT I COULDN'T FIND IT ANYWHERE.
THANKS FOR LETTING ME BORROW THIS, TAKUYA.


HUH?

?!
HIROSE...
IN CHARGE OF WATERING THE PLANTS

I'M SURPRISED THAT HITOSHI LIKES MANGA SO MUCH.

PSHHH


DID YOU READ IT, ENOKI?
REALLY?
MY DAD SAID HE ALWAYS READS THAT MAGAZINE ON HIS WAY TO WORK.

WHAT?
THAT MAGA-ZINE...
MAGAZINE
BOYS' COMIC

MORON!!

THAT ONE'S STUPID!!
"ENTER THE FATHER"?
GRRR
STUPID? I THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY.

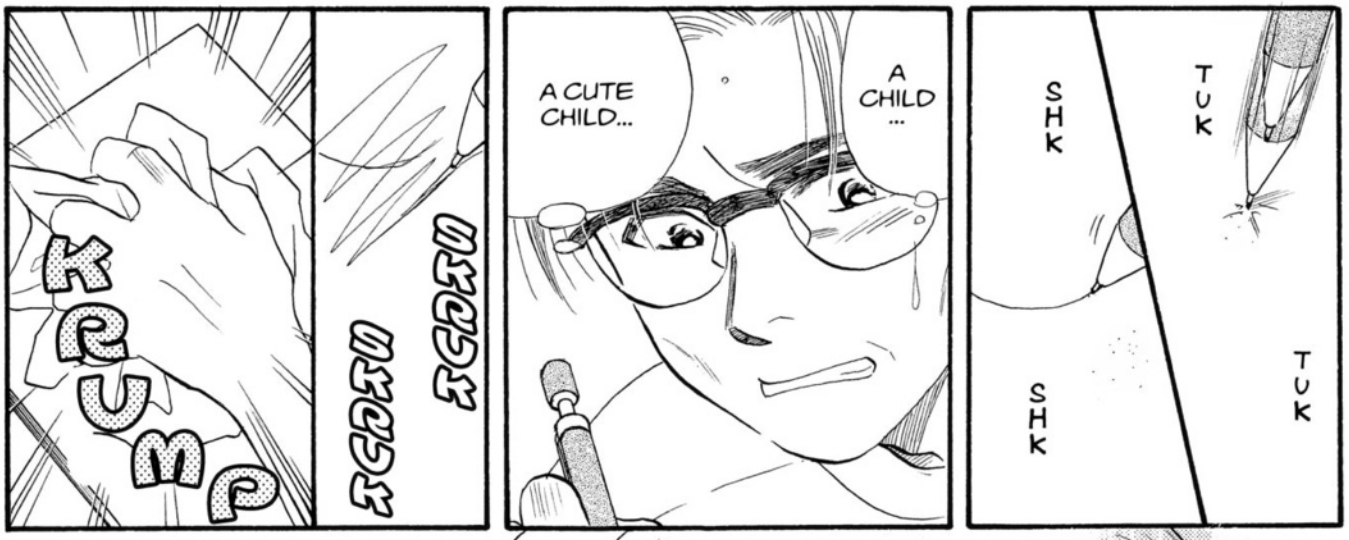
WELL, JUST "ENTER THE FATHER."
ME?

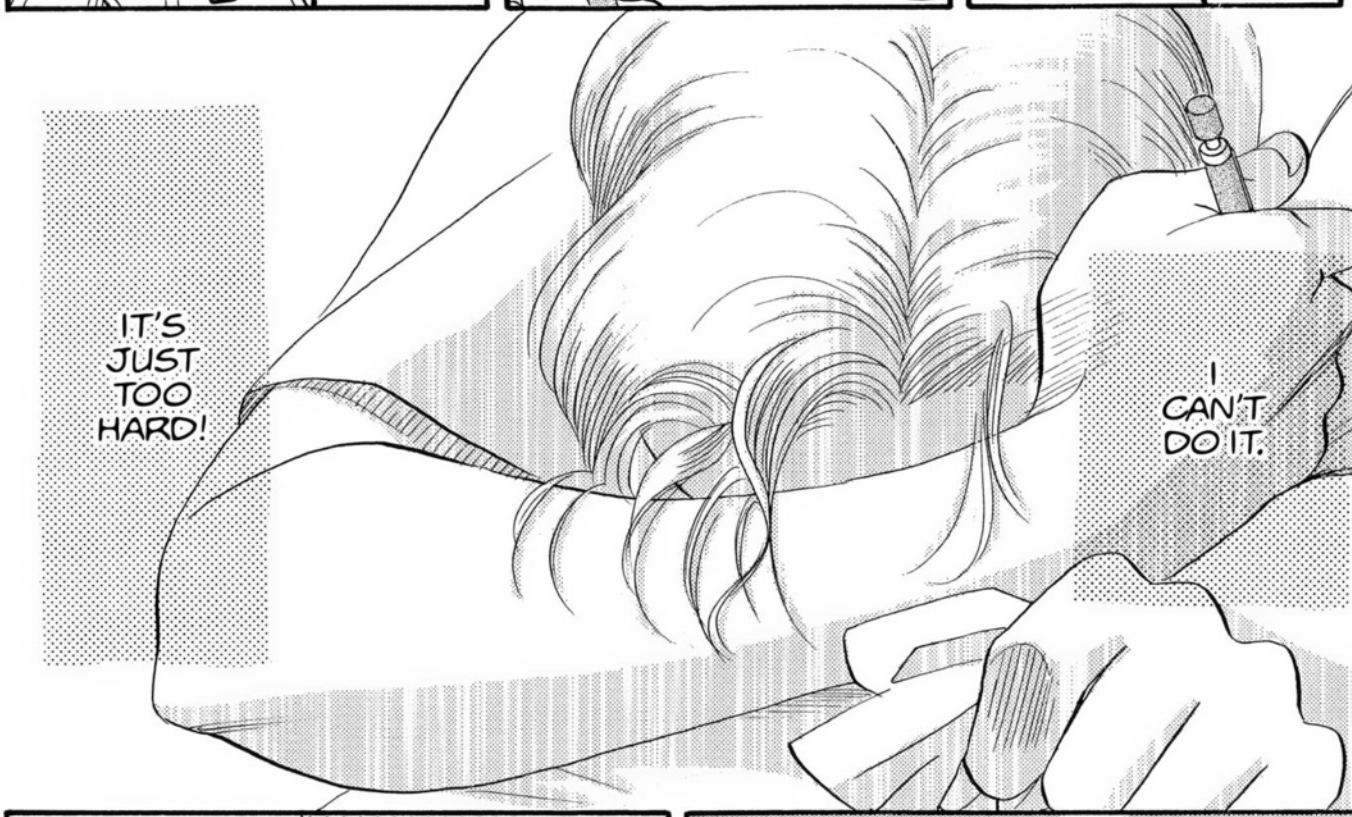
HMPH!
T-TAKUYA?
THROB
MORON
THROB
MORON MORON

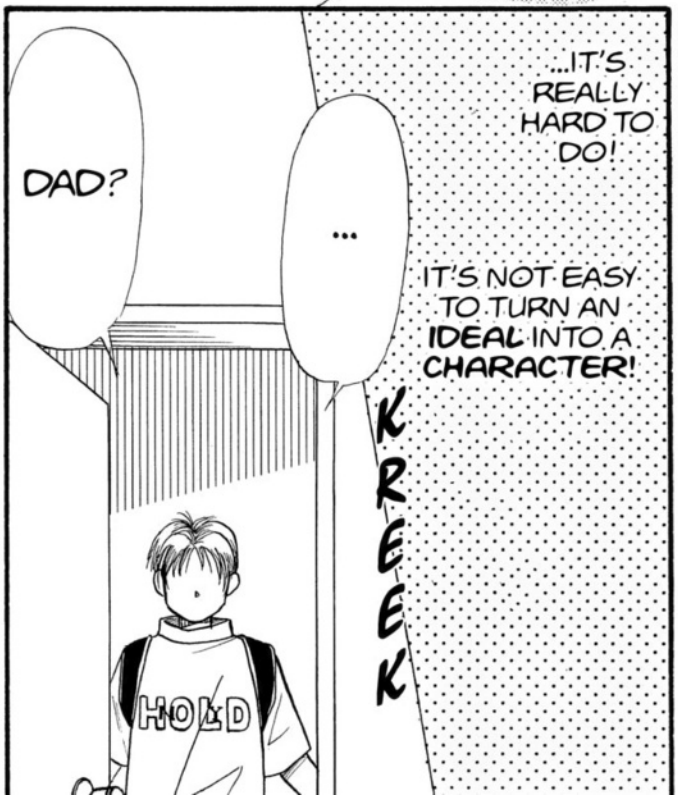
...

THESE PEOPLE CAN'T TELL GOOD MANGA FROM BAD!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
HOLD

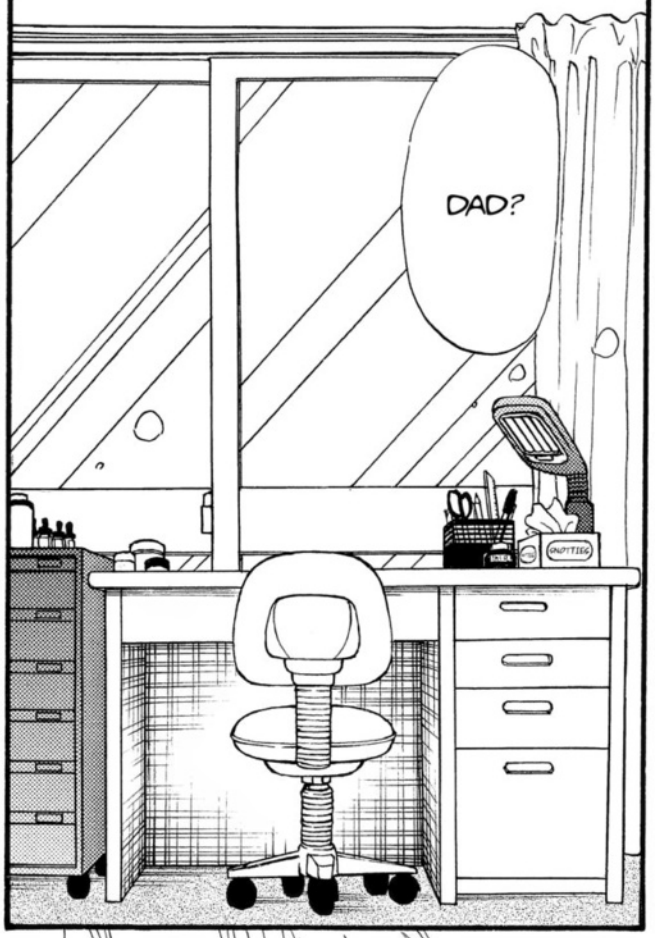

TUK
TUK
SHK
SHK
A CHILD ...
A CUTE CHILD...
HUGGY HUGGY
KRUMP


I CAN'T DO IT.
IT'S JUST TOO HARD!


...IT'S REALLY HARD TO DO!
IT'S NOT EASY TO TURN AN IDEAL INTO A CHARACTER!
KREEK
...
DAD?
HOLD

THE FASTER I RUN, THE FARTHER AWAY THE LIGHT SEEMS TO BE.
IT'S EASY TO TALK ABOUT, AND EVEN THINK ABOUT...
...BUT...

HE'S NOT HERE.
HUH?
HOLD

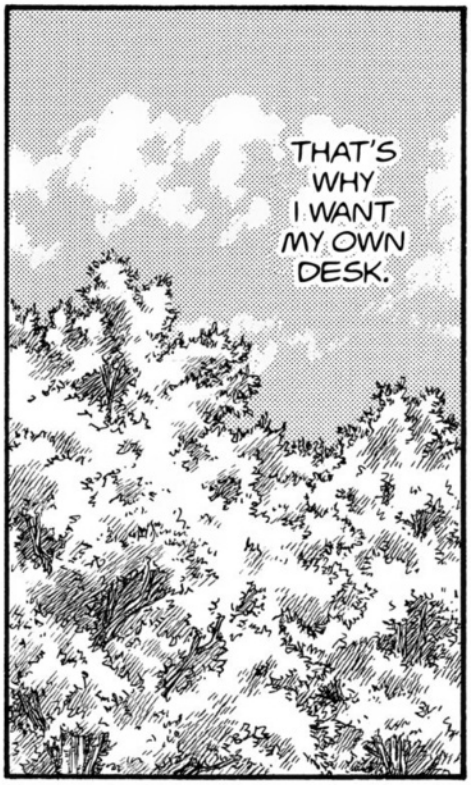

DAD?

OH...

THAT'S IT.

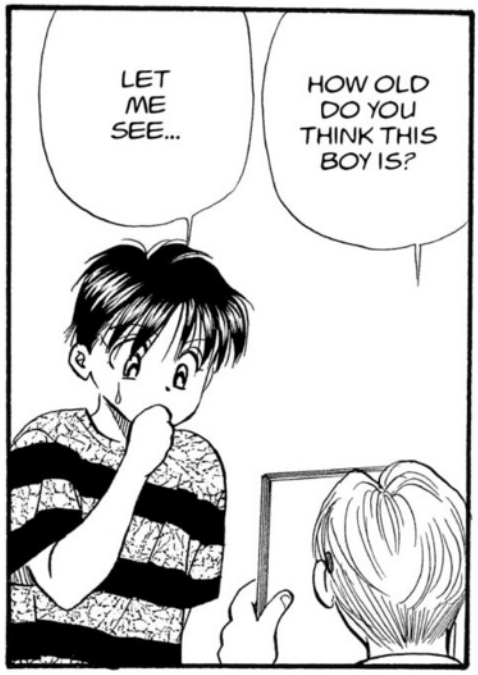
THAT'S HIROSE'S DAD.

HEY...
UNDA DE BIG CHES'NUT TWEE!


THAT'S WHY I WANT MY OWN DESK.

TAKUYA AND MINORU.
OH...
HEWWO.
TUP
UP

HELLO.


LET ME SEE...
HOW OLD DO YOU THINK THIS BOY IS?

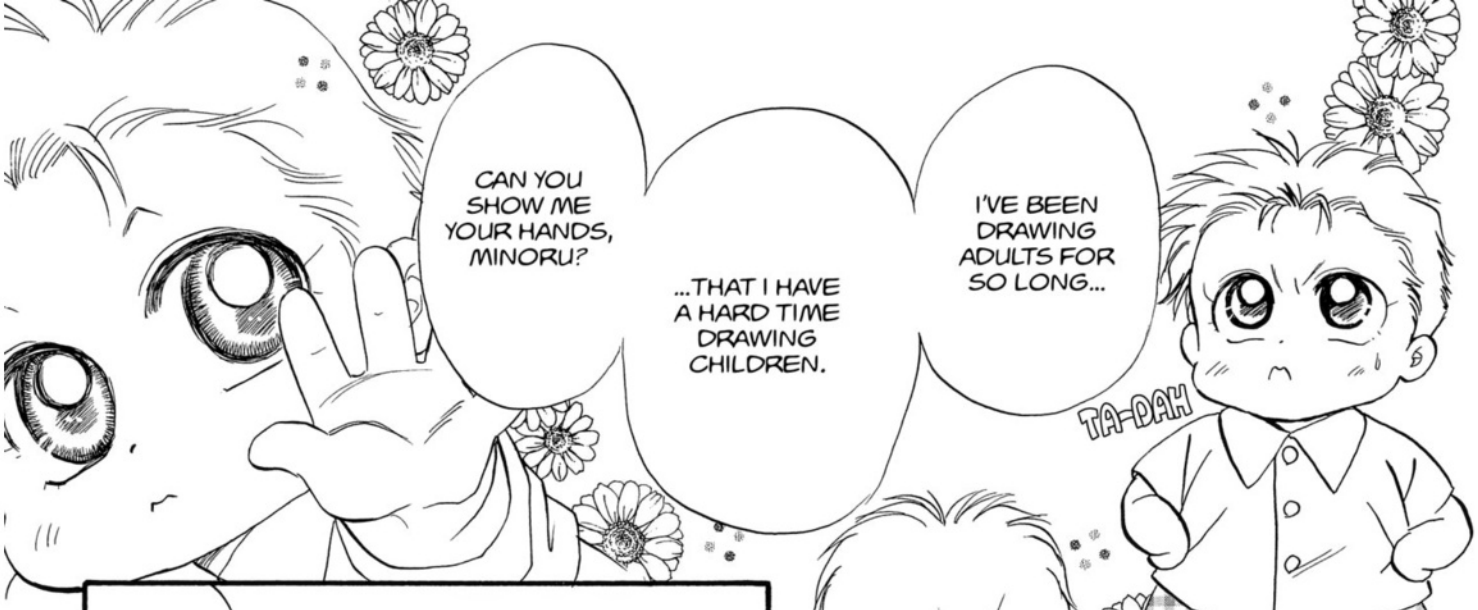
CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
OH, WELL...
SURE.
FWAP
FWAP

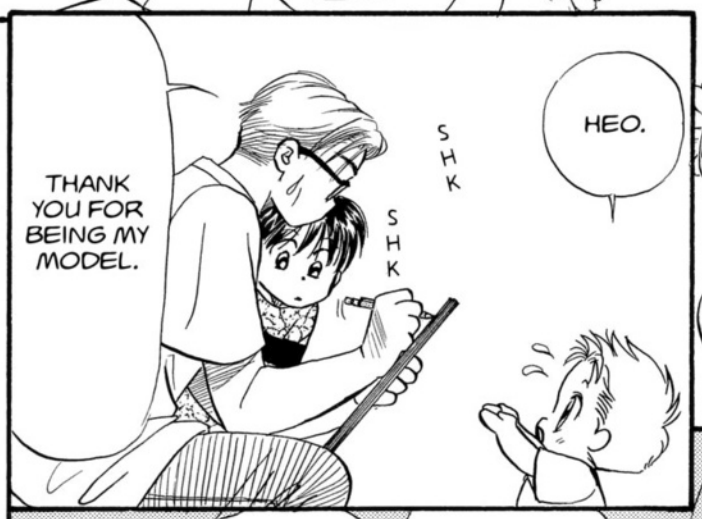
OH?
YOU LOOK A LITTLE DOWN TODAY.
DO I?
YEAH.

I JUST CAN'T DRAW LITTLE KIDS.
UM... I'M SORRY.
HUH?
GLOOM
SNIFF
SNIFF

WHAT? NO WAY!!
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE FIVE YEARS OLD!

ABOUT MY AGE, I GUESS.


CAN YOU SHOW ME YOUR HANDS, MINORU?
...THAT I HAVE A HARD TIME DRAWING CHILDREN.
I'VE BEEN DRAWING ADULTS FOR SO LONG...
TA-DAH

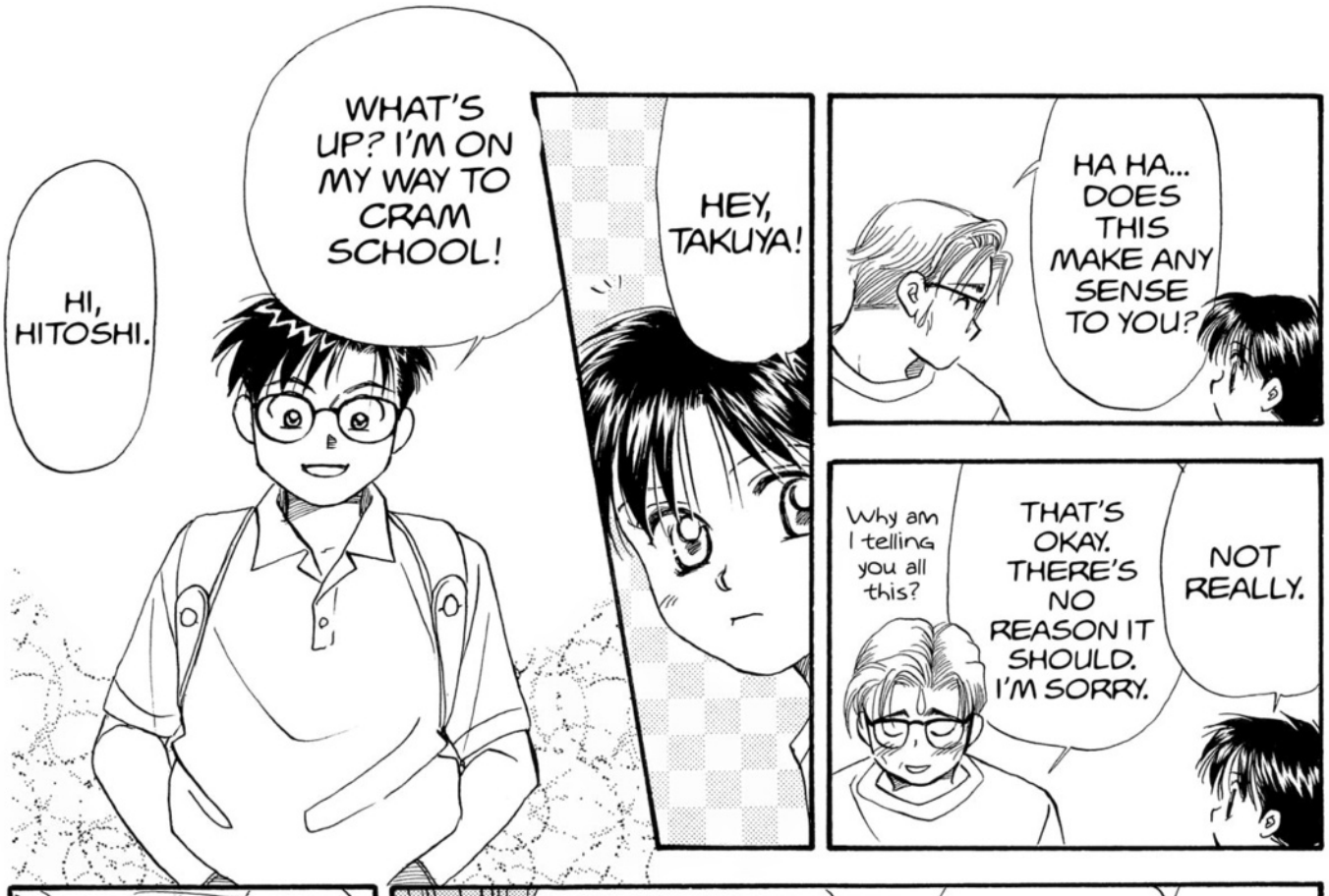

THANK YOU FOR BEING MY MODEL.
SHK
SHK
HEO.

UNH

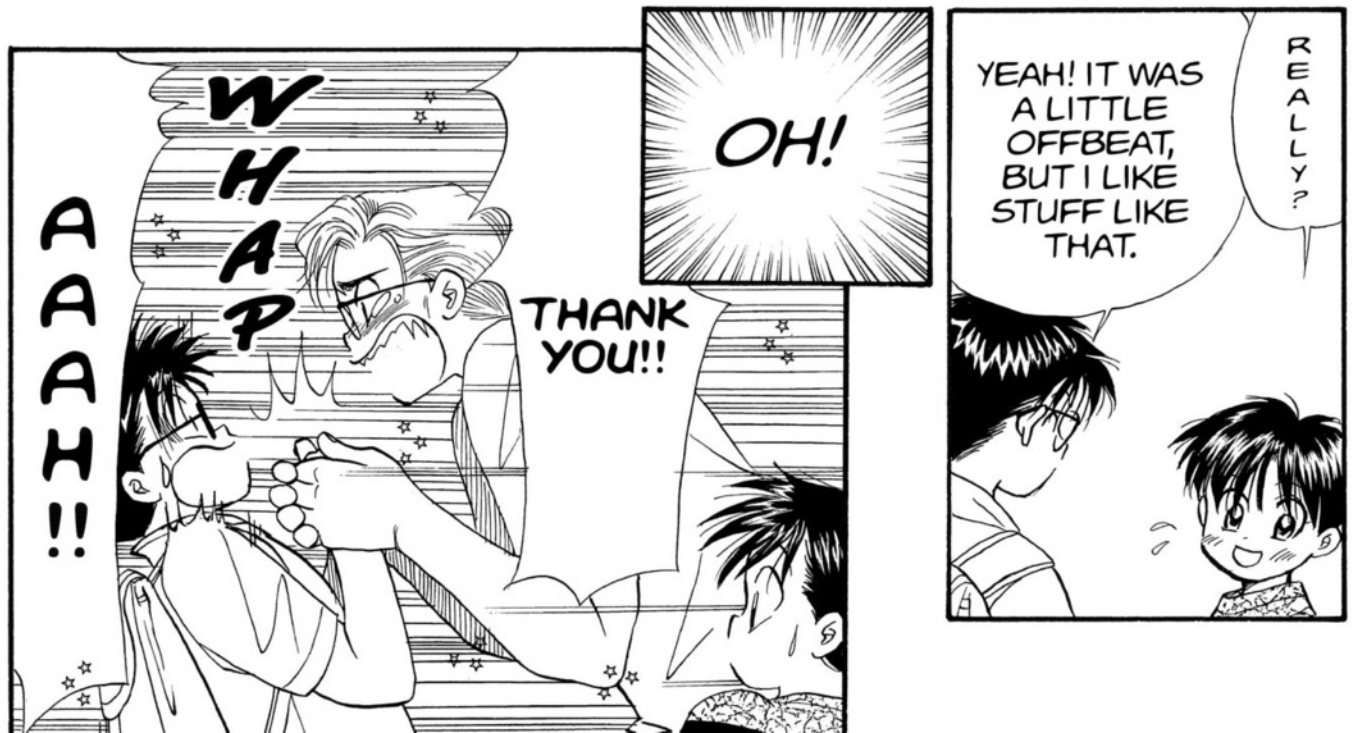
...BUT MY CHARACTERS LACK HEART.
THEY SAY I'M GOOD AT CREATING SETTINGS AND THAT I DRAW WELL...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO, BUT I JUST DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO **MOVE PEOPLE.**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT.
I FOCUS MORE ON **ART** THAN I DO ON **FEELINGS.**

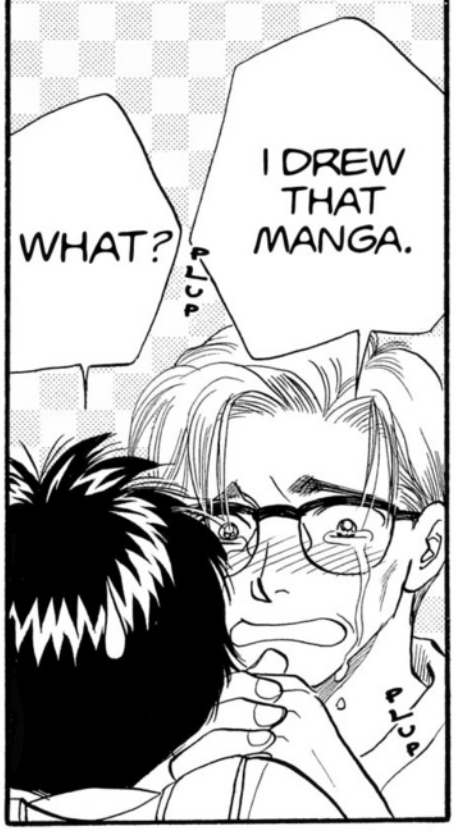

HI, HITOSHI.
WHAT'S UP? I'M ON MY WAY TO CRAM SCHOOL!
HEY, TAKUYA!
HA HA... DOES THIS MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU?
Why am I telling you all this?
THAT'S OKAY. THERE'S NO REASON IT SHOULD. I'M SORRY.
NOT REALLY.

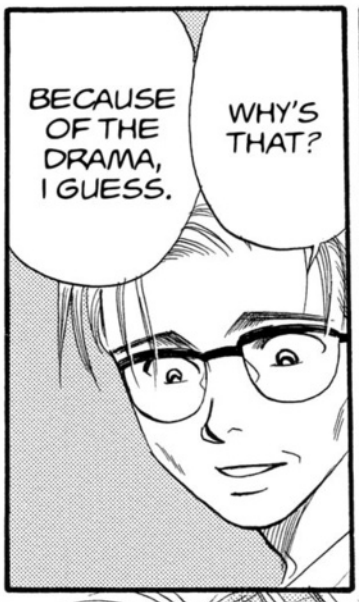
IT WAS COOL!
BUMP
HEY, YOU KNOW THAT MANGA HIROSE'S DAD DID?
JUST ONCE A WEEK. TAMADATE GOES THERE TOO.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WENT TO CRAM SCHOOL.


REALLY?
YEAH! IT WAS A LITTLE OFFBEAT, BUT I LIKE STUFF LIKE THAT.
OH!
THANK YOU!!
WHAP
AAAH!!

COOL.
THAT'S IT.
LIKE THIS?
THE KANJI CHARACTERS ARE "HUMANITY" AND "WILL."

MAKE IT OUT TO HITOSHI, OKAY?

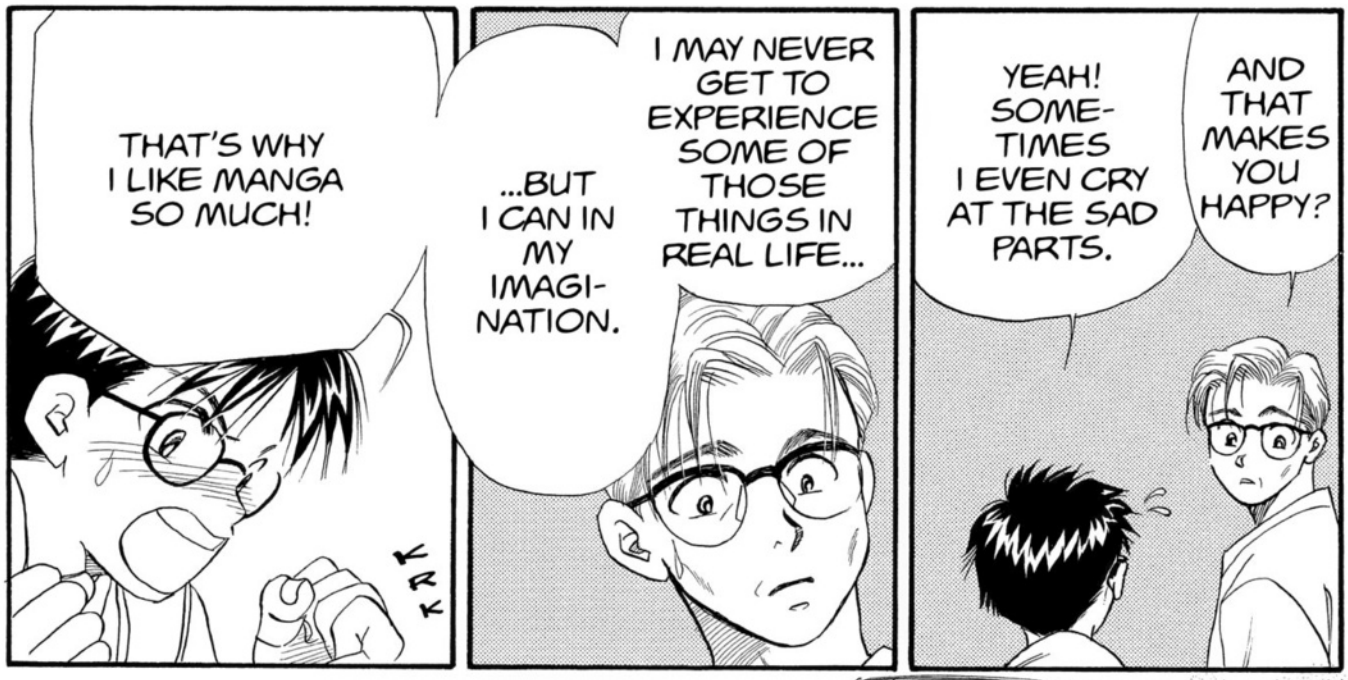

WHAT?
I DREW THAT MANGA.
PLUP
PLUP


WHY'S THAT?
BECAUSE OF THE DRAMA, I GUESS.

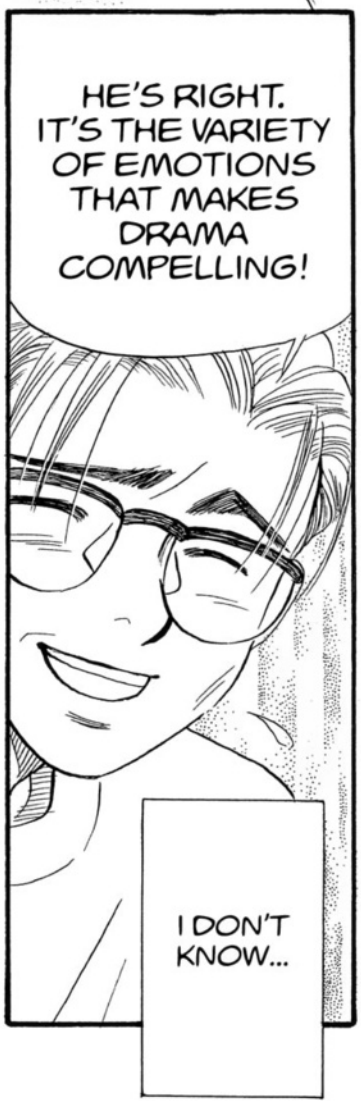
DO YOU LIKE MANGA?
YEAH! I READ ALL KINDS.
BUT I LIKE SPORTS MANGA BEST.
Hirose

AWESOME! I GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED DRAWING FROM A PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTIST!
JAHOO!!

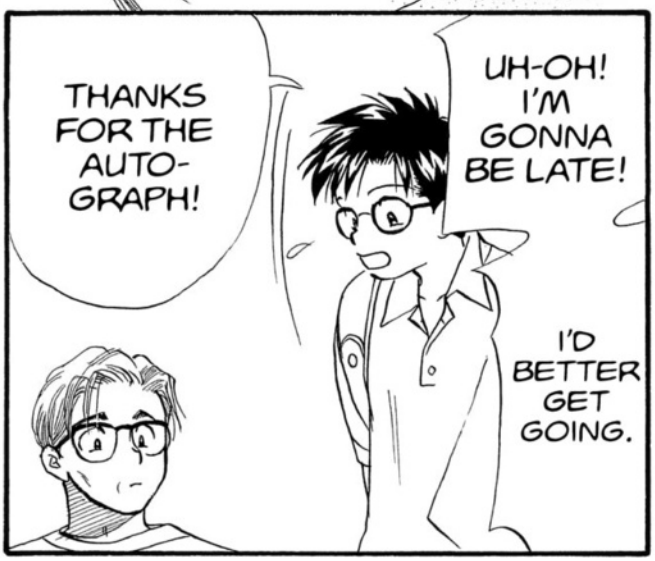
I DON'T DO JUDO, OR SOCCER, OR BASKETBALL...
...BUT I CAN REALLY FEEL THE EXCITEMENT AND FRUSTRATION WHEN I READ ABOUT THEM.


THAT'S WHY I LIKE MANGA SO MUCH!
KRK
...BUT I CAN IN MY IMAGI-NATION.
I MAY NEVER GET TO EXPERIENCE SOME OF THOSE THINGS IN REAL LIFE...
YEAH! SOME-TIMES I EVEN CRY AT THE SAD PARTS.
AND THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?

AH...


HE'S RIGHT. IT'S THE VARIETY OF EMOTIONS THAT MAKES DRAMA COMPELLING!
I DON'T KNOW...

SUCH INCRE-DIBLE INSIGHTS, AND HE'S JUST A KID!
HA HA... I GIVE UP!
WHAT?


THANKS FOR THE AUTO-GRAPH!
UH-OH! I'M GONNA BE LATE!
I'D BETTER GET GOING.

SEE YOU.
BYE-BYE!
BYE, TAKUYA! BYE, MINORU!

TOILET
HI, DAD.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
I WENT FOR A WALK.
HOLD
FLAP
FLAP

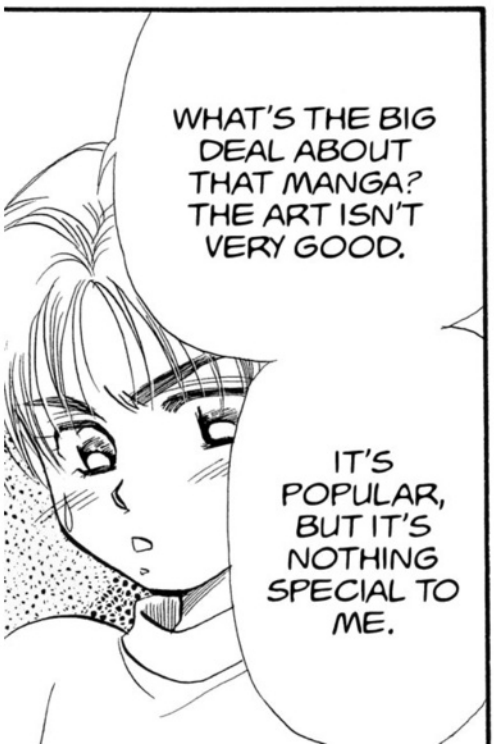
I'M HOME.
WUMP

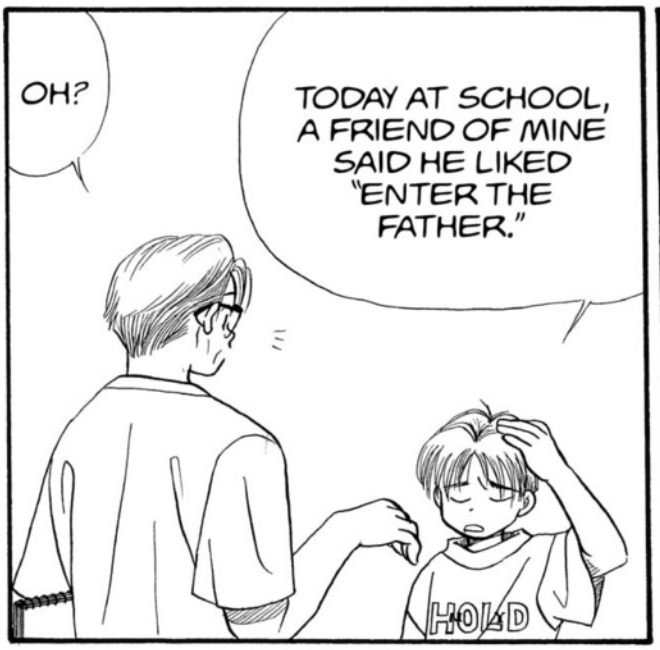
KLAK

...WHAT'S BOTHERING MR. HIROSE...
...BUT ONE THING'S OBVIOUS: HE REALLY LOVES MANGA.
?

PAT
PAT
NO THANKS. I JUST NEED TO BE ALONE AND THINK FOR A WHILE, OKAY?

ARE YOU GOING TO WORK?
CAN I GET YOU SOME COFFEE?

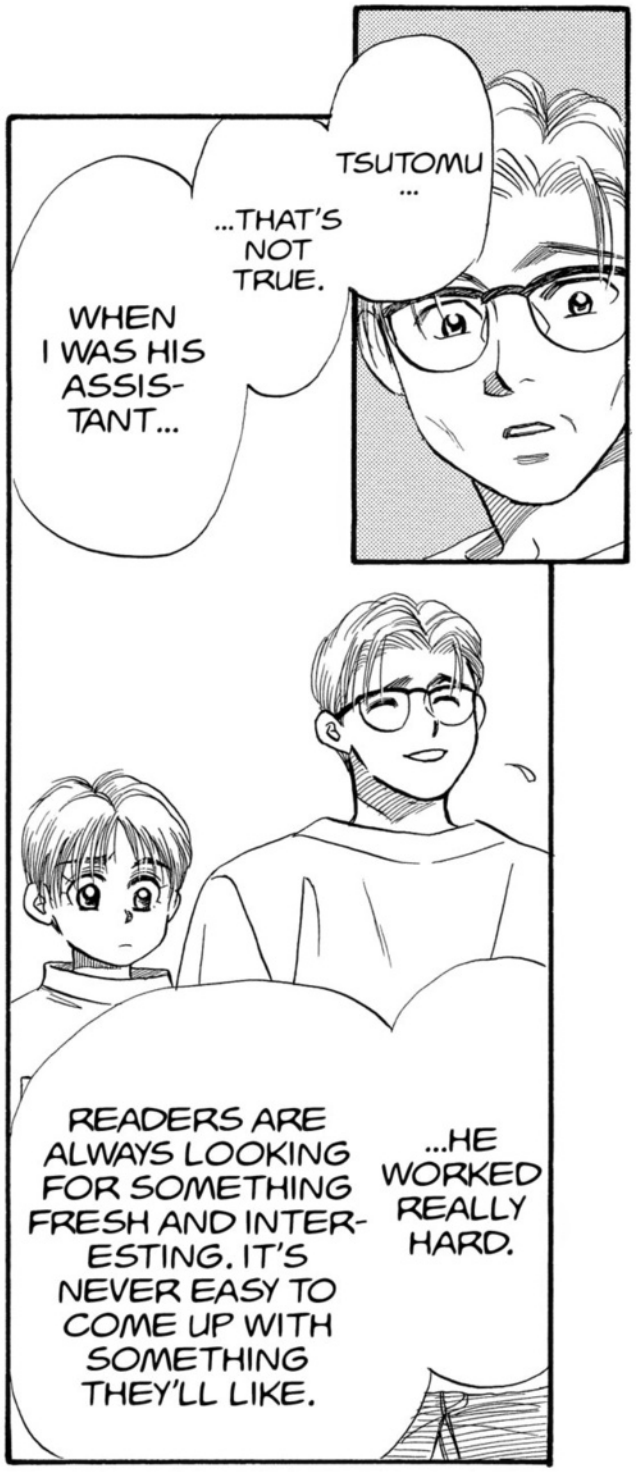

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT THAT MANGA? THE ART ISN'T VERY GOOD.
IT'S POPULAR, BUT IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL TO ME.


OH?
TODAY AT SCHOOL, A FRIEND OF MINE SAID HE LIKED "ENTER THE FATHER."
HOLD

HE NEEDS TO THINK?

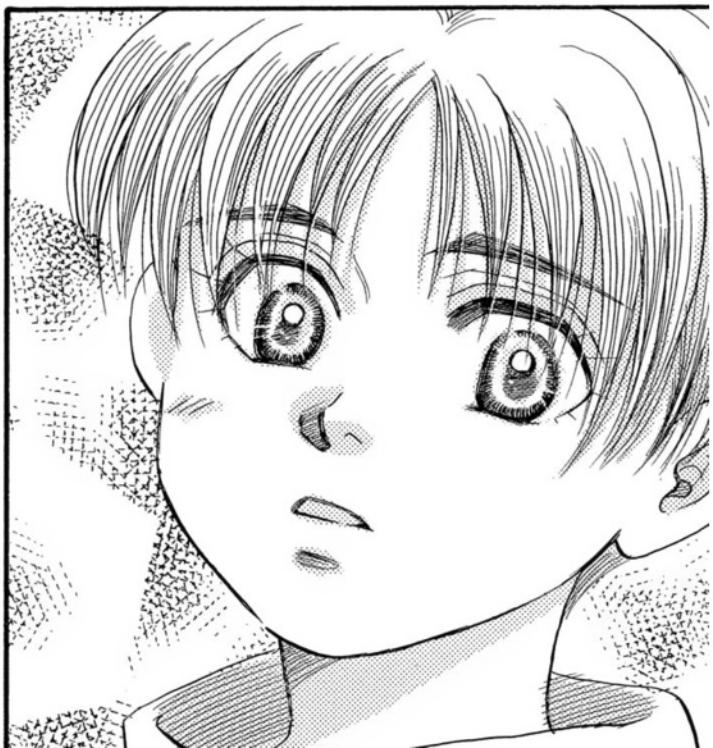
DON'T BE SO SURE.
ACTU-ALLY...
...IT HELPS ME A LOT TO TALK ABOUT MY WORK WITH YOU AND YOUR MOTHER.

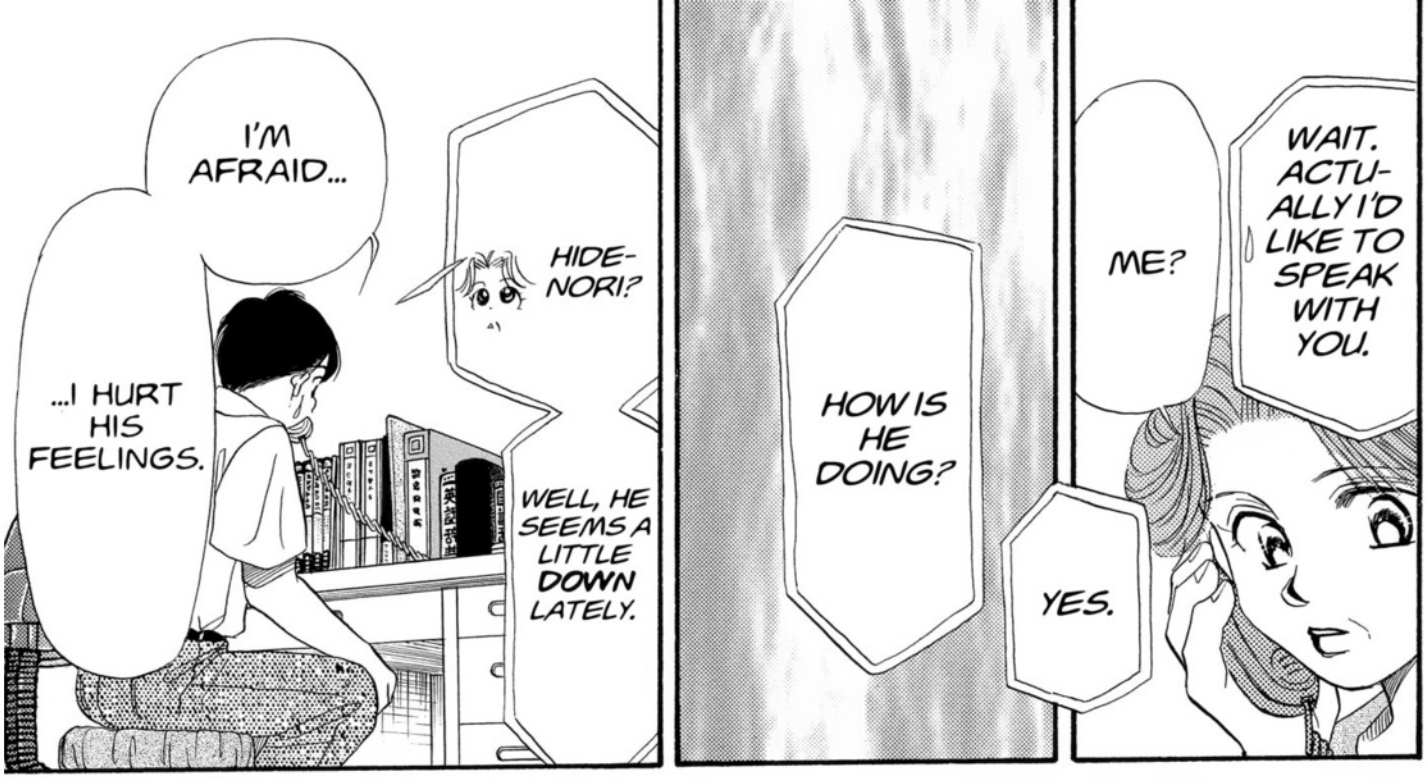
REALLY?
YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT MANGA WITH MOM OR ME VERY MUCH.
AND SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO UNDER-STAND IT AT ALL.


TSUTOMU ...
...THAT'S NOT TRUE.
WHEN I WAS HIS ASSIS-TANT...
READERS ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING FRESH AND INTER-ESTING. IT'S NEVER EASY TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING THEY'LL LIKE.
...HE WORKED REALLY HARD.

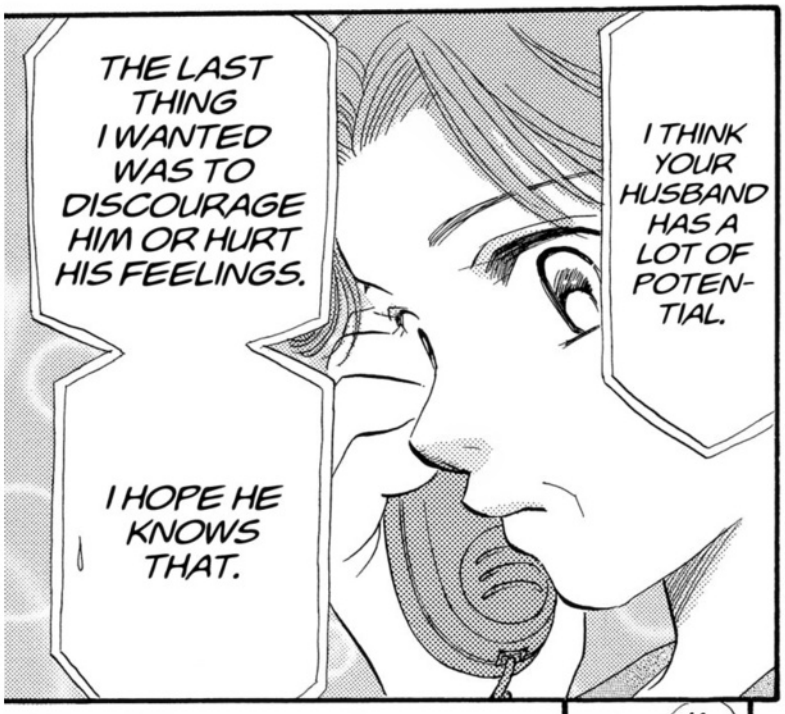
KLAK
HELLO?
MR. MIYAZAKI?
I'LL GET HIDENORI.

RINGGG.
RINGGG

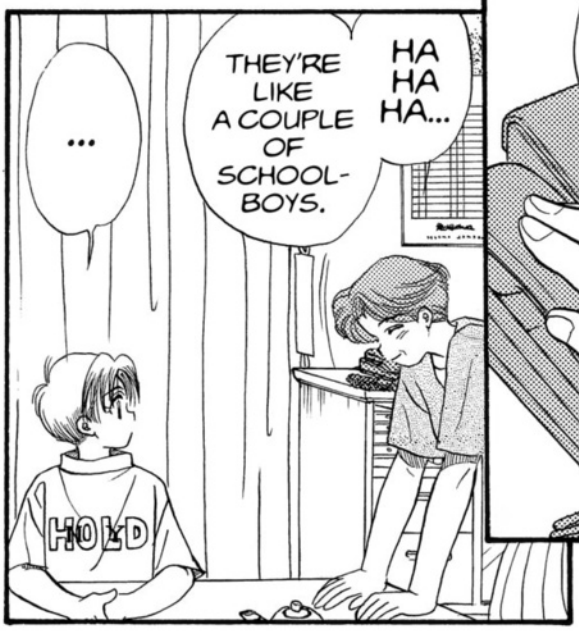



WAIT. ACTUALLY I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
ME?
YES.
HOW IS HE DOING?
HIDENORI?
WELL, HE SEEMS A LITTLE DOWN LATELY.
I'M AFRAID...
...I HURT HIS FEELINGS.

WHAT HAPPENED?
I POINTED OUT SOME WAYS HE MIGHT IMPROVE HIS WORK...
...BUT I HOPE HE DIDN'T THINK I WAS TOO CRITICAL.

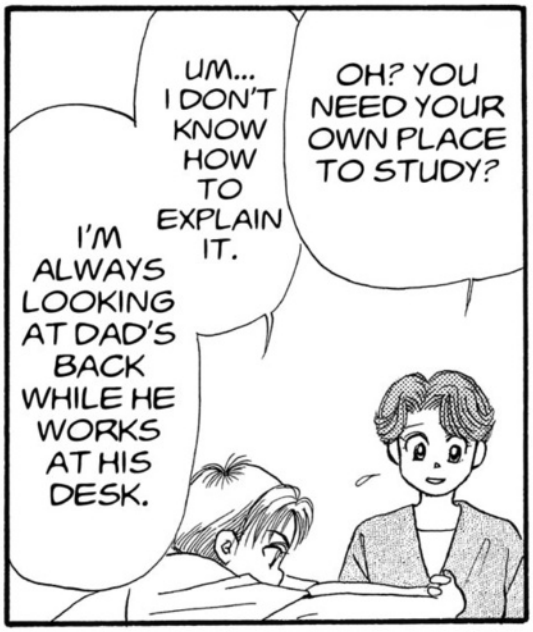

I THINK YOUR HUSBAND HAS A LOT OF POTENTIAL.
THE LAST THING I WANTED WAS TO DISCOURAGE HIM OR HURT HIS FEELINGS.
I HOPE HE KNOWS THAT.

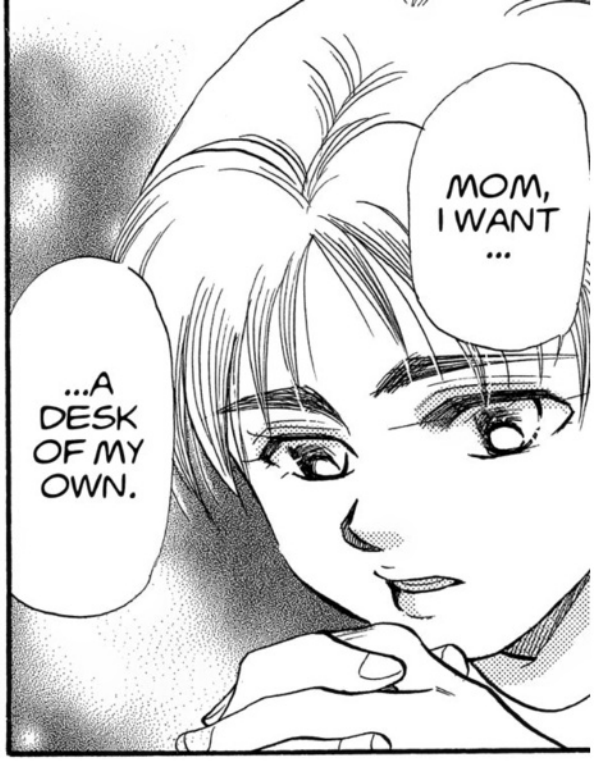
I REALLY WANT HIM TO SUCCEED.
SNUFF
I TOLD HIM THOSE THINGS TO HELP HIM.

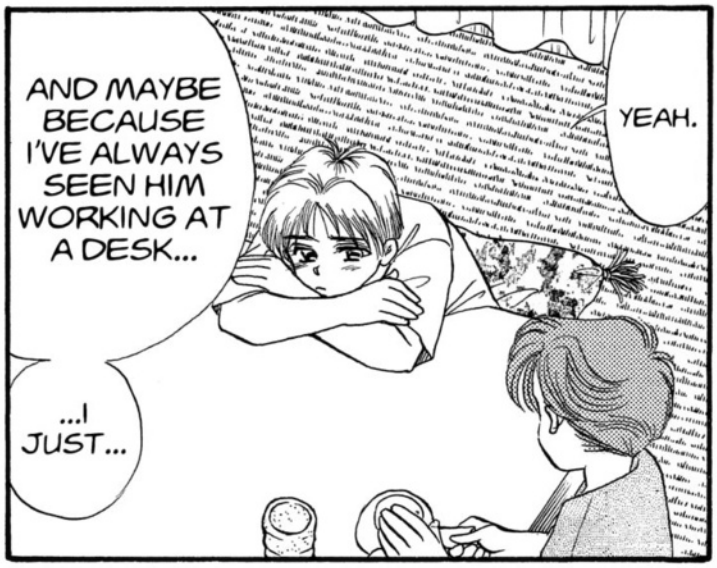

HA HA HA...
THEY'RE LIKE A COUPLE OF SCHOOLBOYS.
...
HOLD

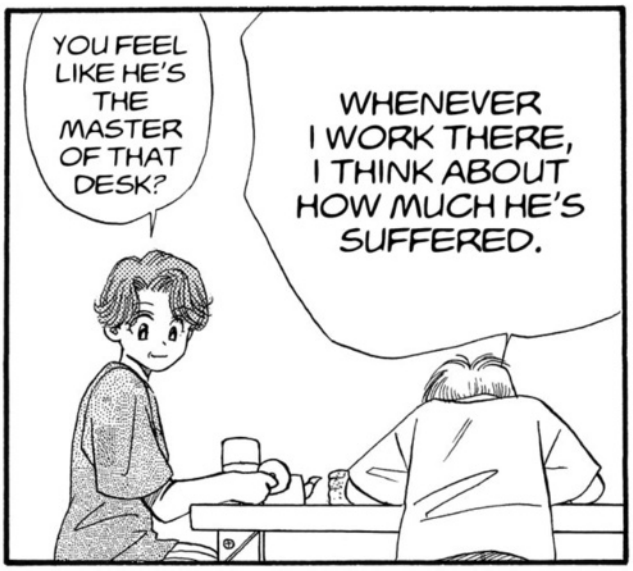
KLAK

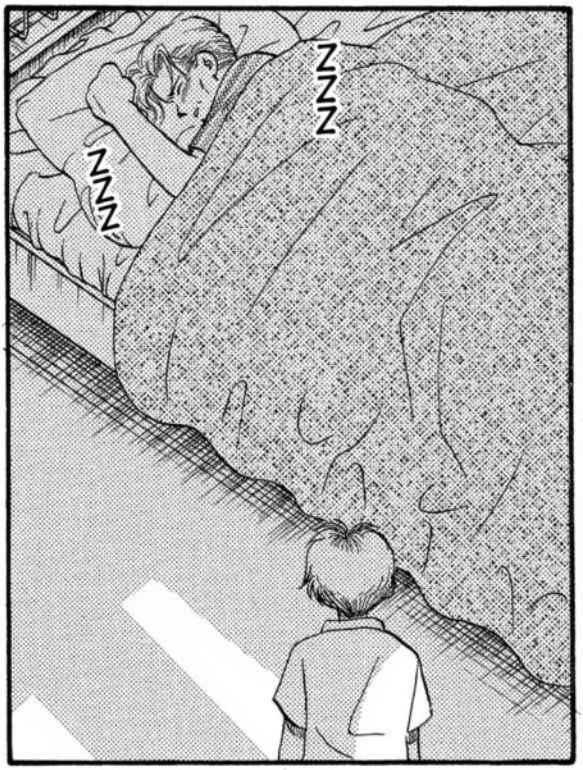
MR. MIYAZAKI...
Y-YES?
DON'T WORRY. HE KNOWS. HE'S WORKED WITH YOU FOR A LONG TIME.
HE UNDERSTANDS IT IN HIS HEAD. HIS FEELINGS JUST HAVEN'T QUITE CAUGHT UP YET.

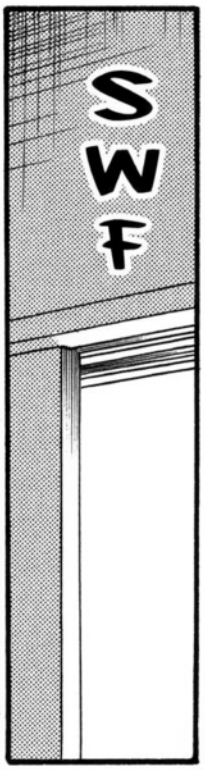

OH? YOU NEED YOUR OWN PLACE TO STUDY?
UM... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.
I'M ALWAYS LOOKING AT DAD'S BACK WHILE HE WORKS AT HIS DESK.


MOM, I WANT ...
...A DESK OF MY OWN.

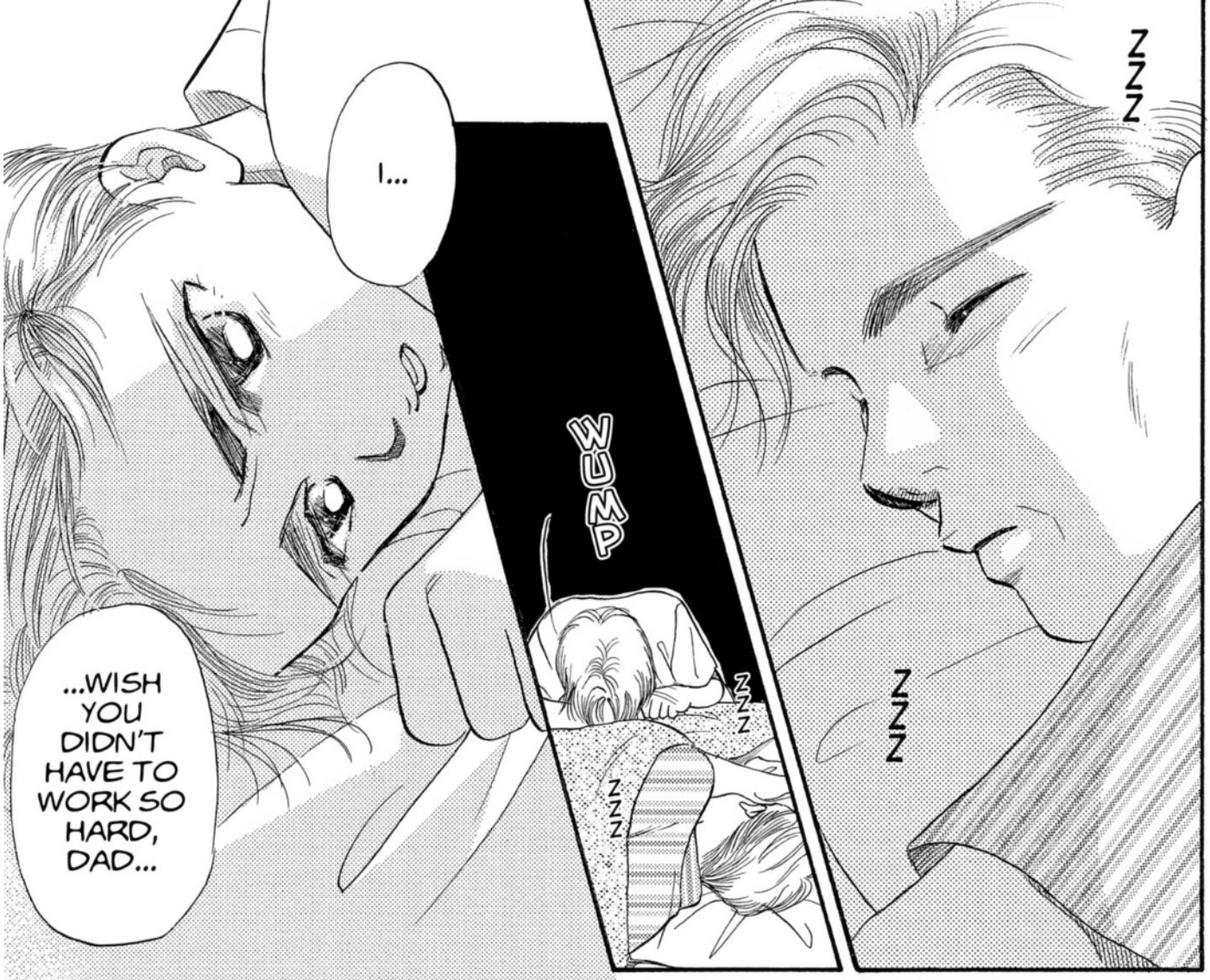

YEAH.
AND MAYBE BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS SEEN HIM WORKING AT A DESK...
...I JUST...

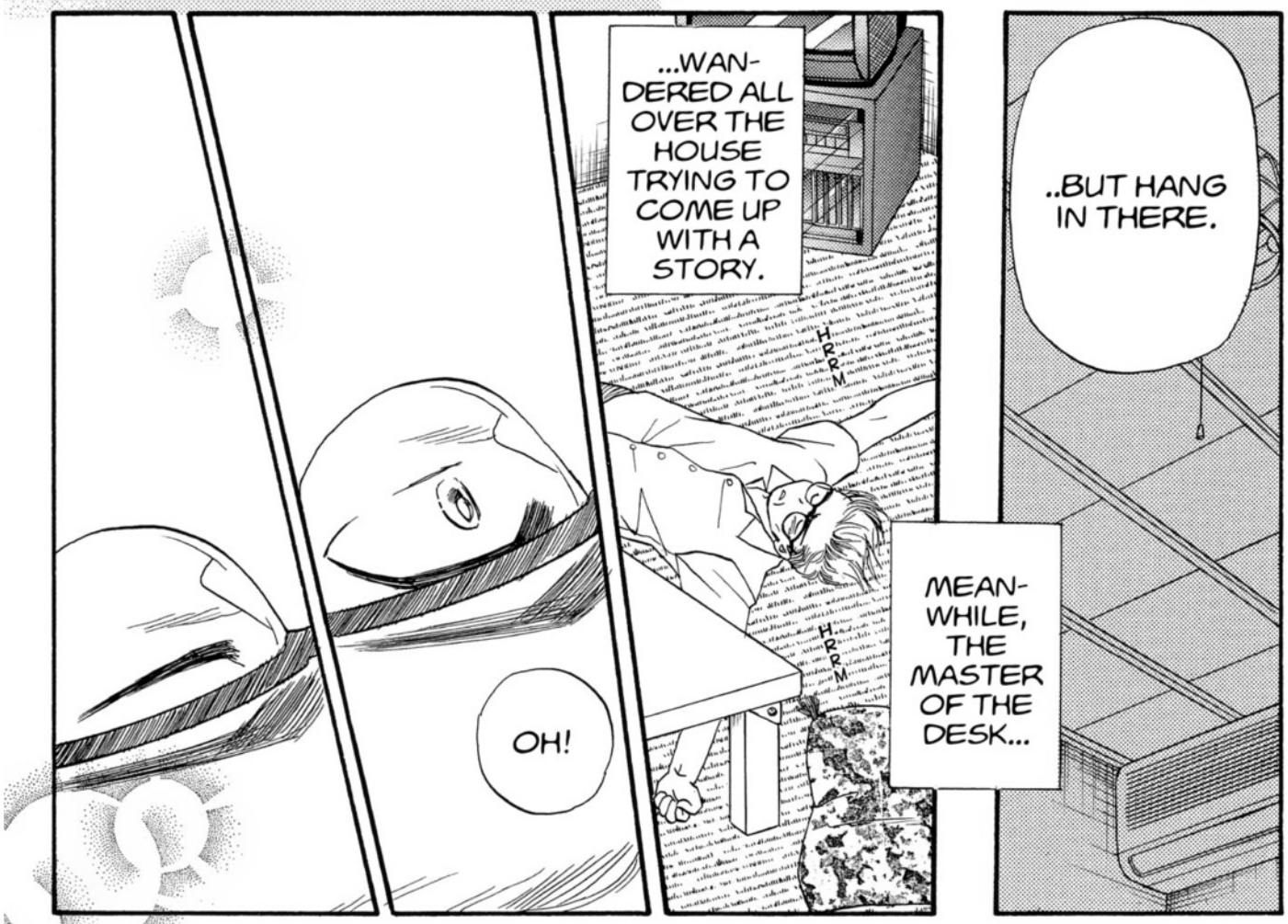

YOU FEEL LIKE HE'S THE MASTER OF THAT DESK?
WHENEVER I WORK THERE, I THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH HE'S SUFFERED.


ZZZ
ZZZ


SWF

...WANT ONE FOR MYSELF.
I WANT WHAT DAD HAS.


ZZZ
I...
WUMP
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
...WISH YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WORK SO HARD, DAD...


..BUT HANG IN THERE.
MEAN-WHILE, THE MASTER OF THE DESK...
...WAN-DERED ALL OVER THE HOUSE TRYING TO COME UP WITH A STORY.
HRRM
HRRM
OH!

WOOF WOOF WOOF
RINGGG
RINGGG
Did you hear? I was at the super-market, and I...
ENOKI!

SORRY, THERE AREN'T ANY GOOFY CHARACTERS IN THIS ONE.
CAN I BE A MODEL, TOO?
WAAH
WAAH

...MY DAD WOULD LIKE YOUR BROTHER TO BE HIS MODEL AGAIN.
IF YOU HAVE TIME TODAY...
MINORU? OKAY.

HUH?
LISTEN..

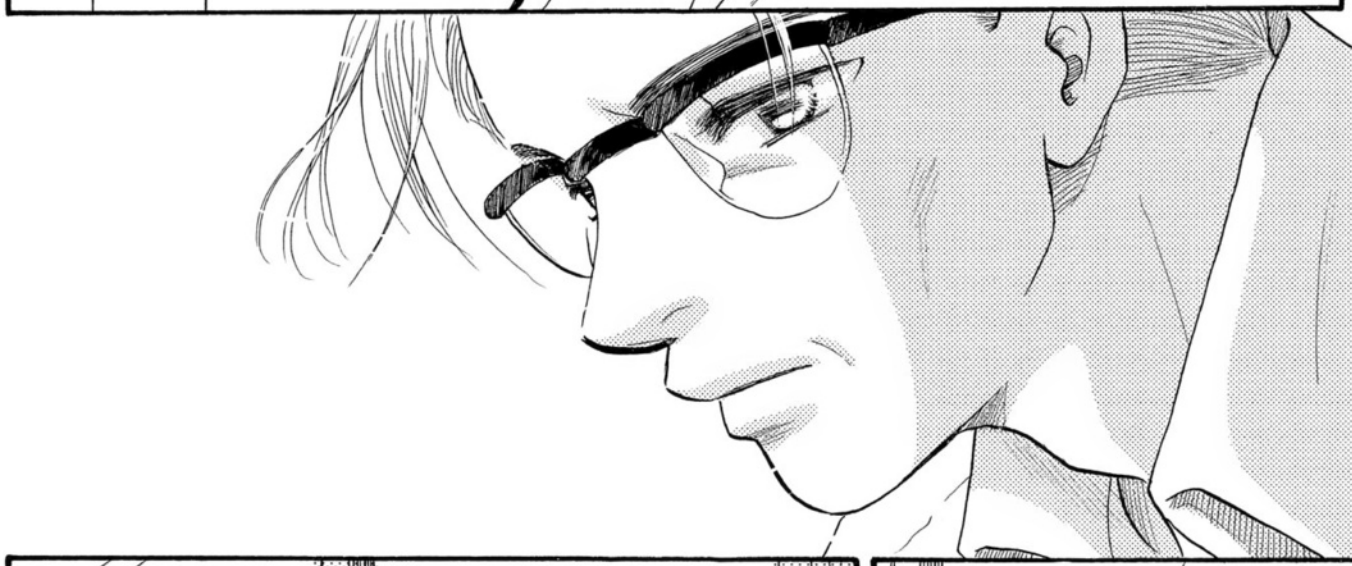
WHAP

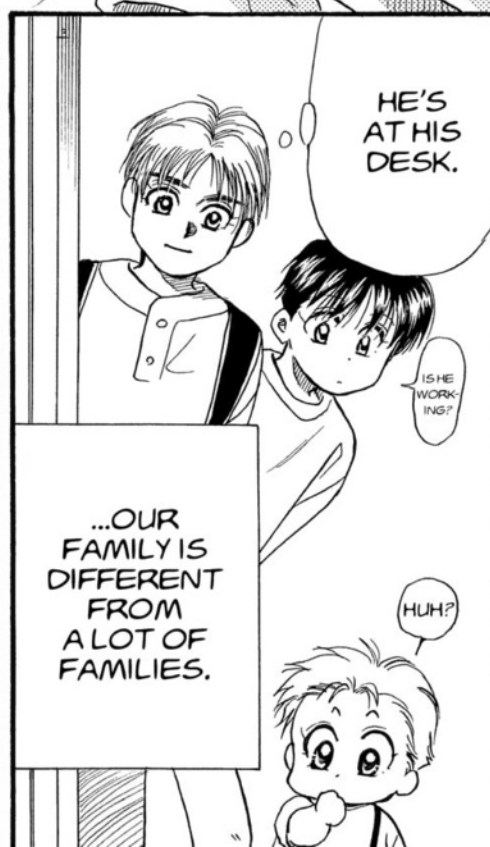
AND WE'VE BEEN SAVING UP TO MOVE TO A BIGGER PLACE.
DESKS CERTAINLY ARE EXPENSIVE.
What exactly are you looking for, ma'am?

HMM...

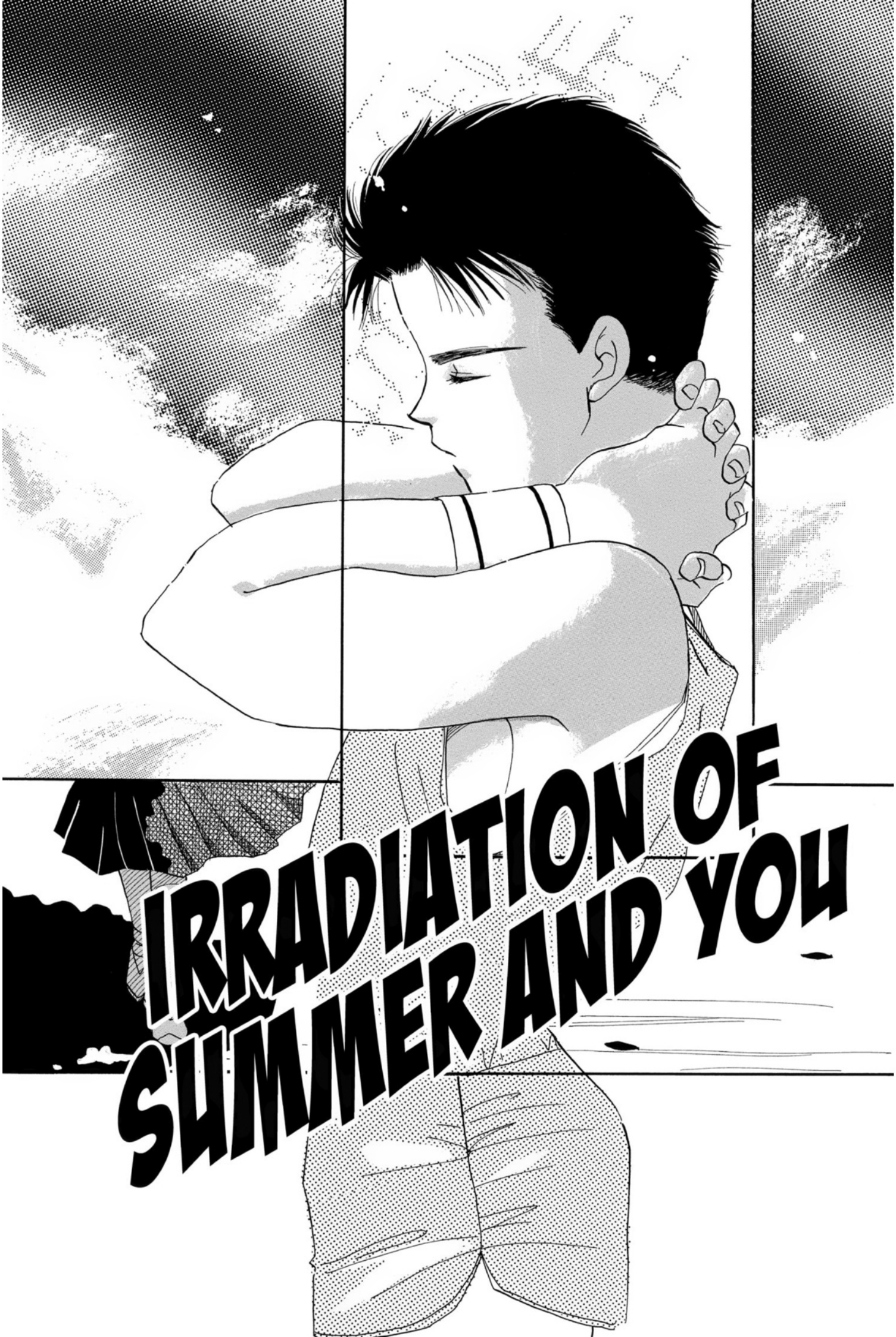
WUZZ
FURNITURE
WUZZ

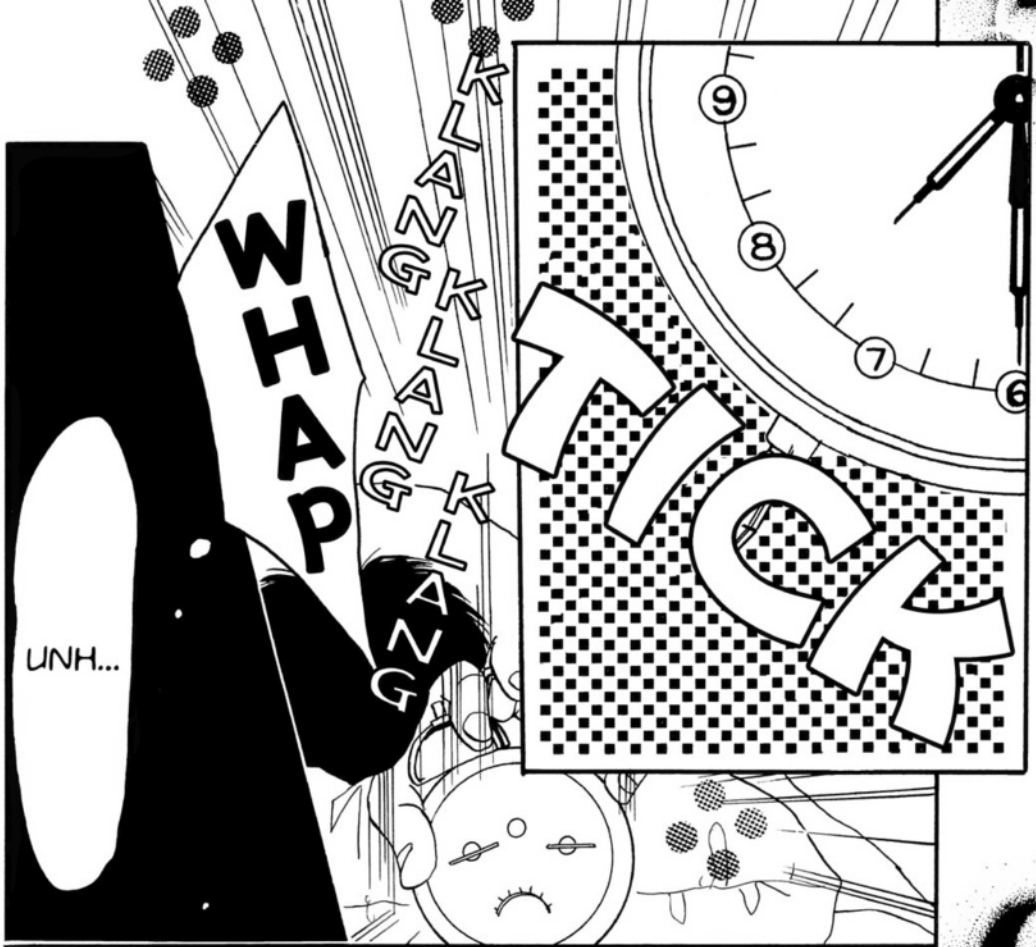
I'M READY...
...TO DRAW.
VICK NONO
SKRIK
MAIN CHARACTER
JEMMIE (MALE)
5 YEARS OLD
RUDE, ACTS LIKE A GROWNUP
HEIR OF THE KONZERN
A GREAT GENIUS
HAS NEVER KNOWN PARENTAL LOVE
CLIENT
35 YEARS OLD, MILITARY OFFICER
SKRIK
KLAK
DAD, I'M HOME!
HMM, NO AN-SWER.
IS HE HERE ?
HE SHOULD BE. MAYBE HE'S IN HIS WORK-ROOM.
COME ON IN.
KLAK
DAD?





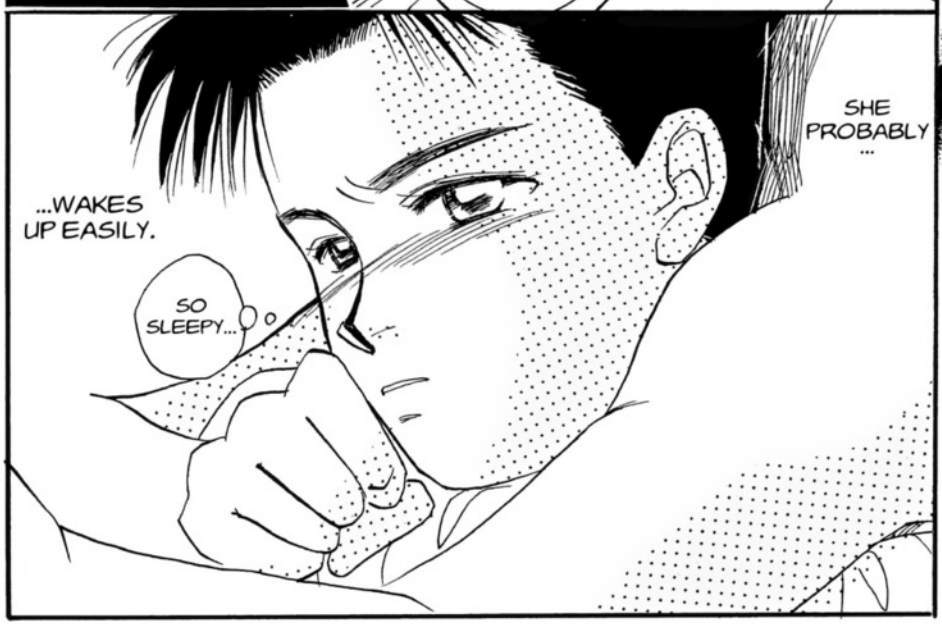
Chapter 85 / The End


IRRADIATION OF
SUMMER AND YOU



I'VE...

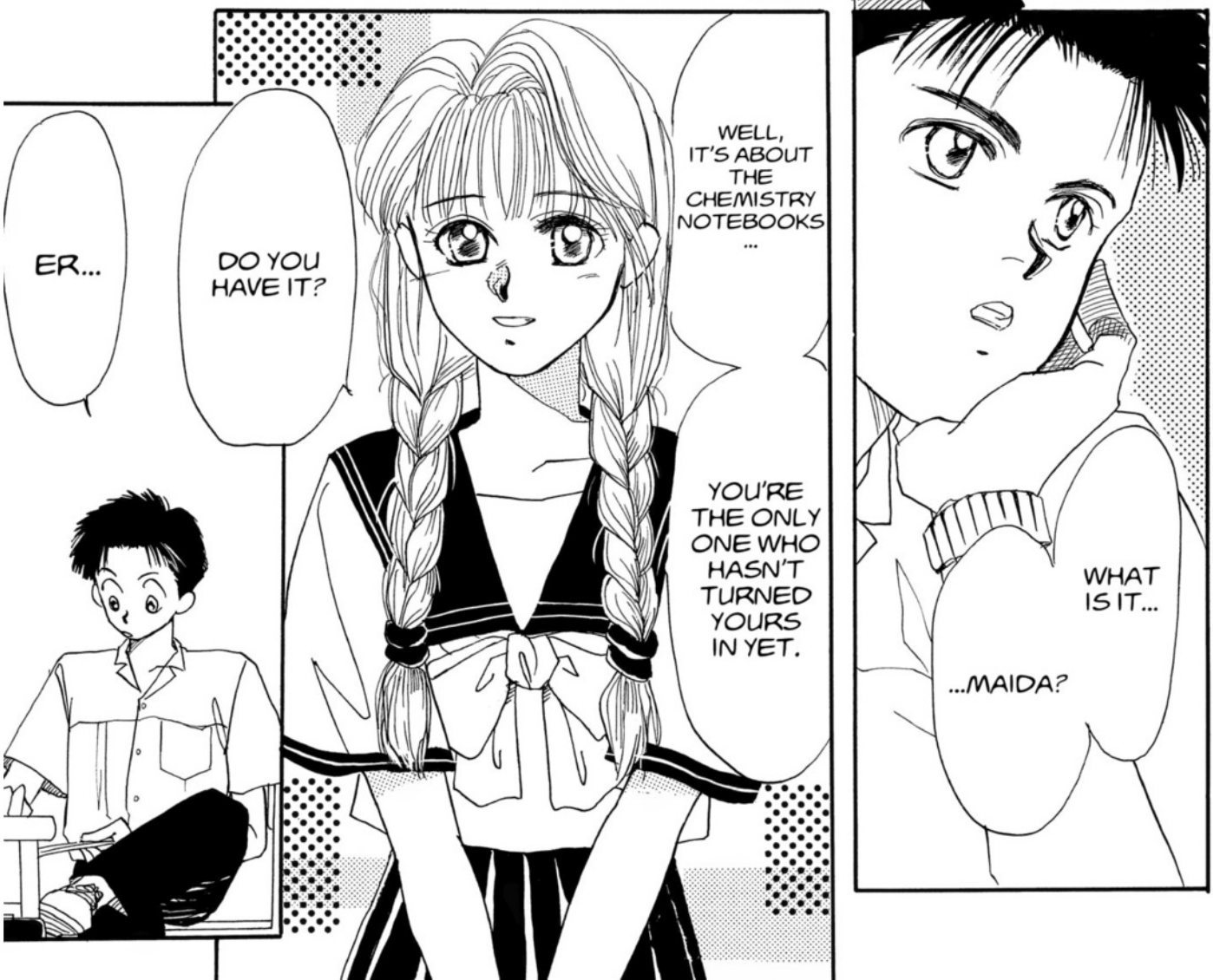
...BEEN THINKING...

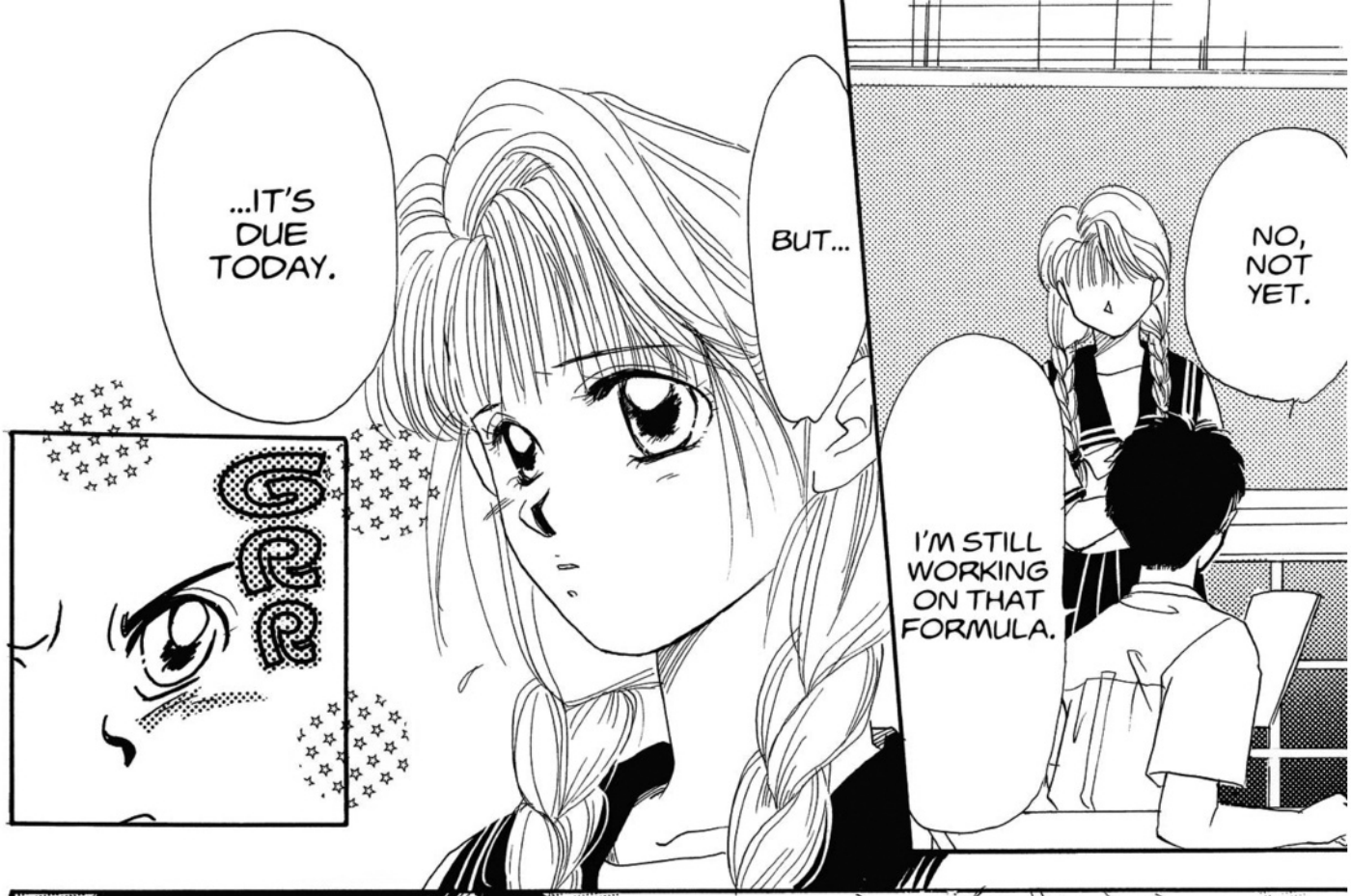


....ABOUT...

...A GIRL.

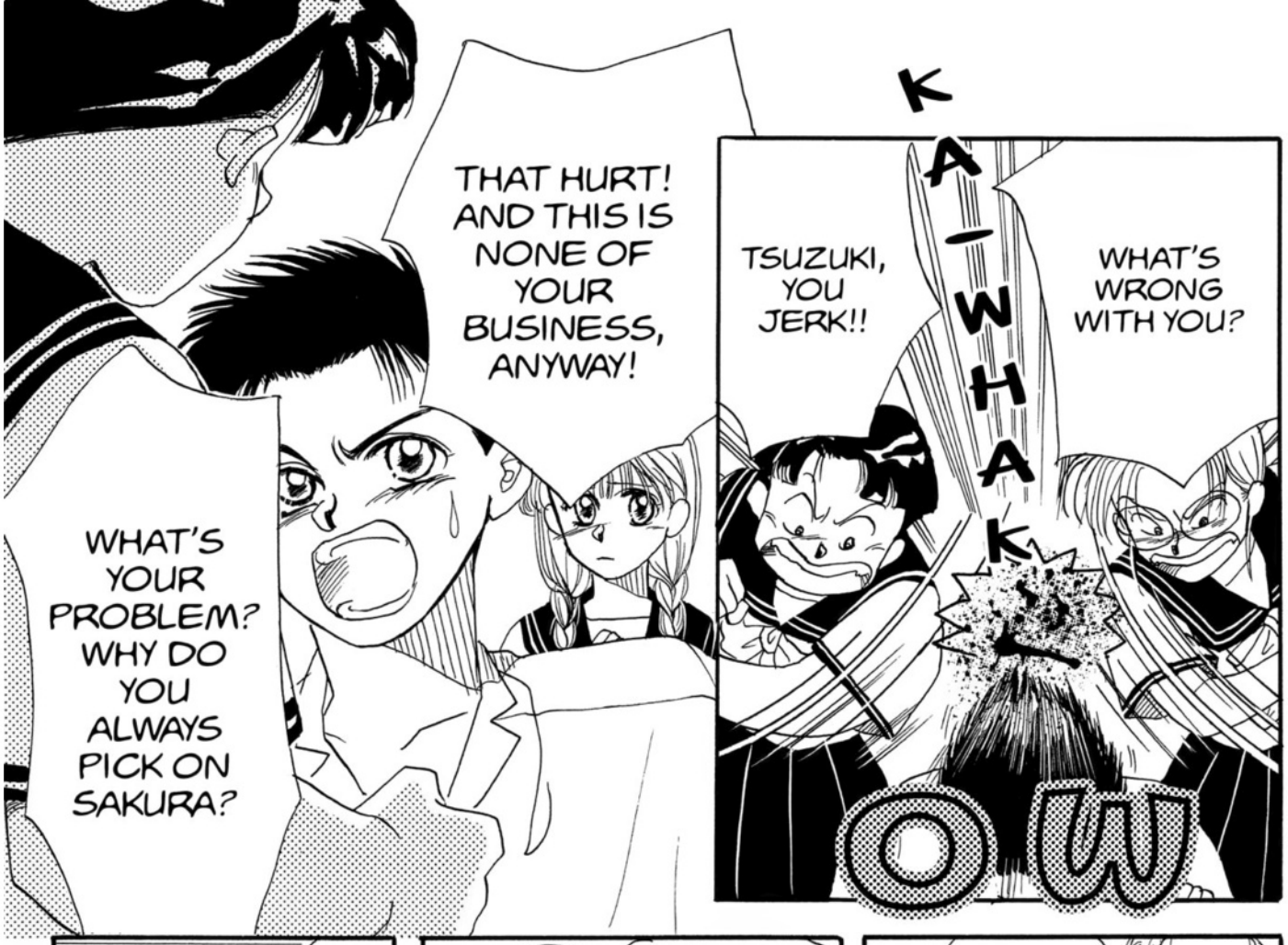
TSUZUKI...
YACK
YACK
TMP
...HER BEHAVING.
THAT'S THE WAY I IMAGINE...
...


ER...
DO YOU HAVE IT?
WELL, IT'S ABOUT THE CHEMISTRY NOTEBOOKS ...
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO HASN'T TURNED YOURS IN YET.
WHAT IS IT...
...MAIDA?

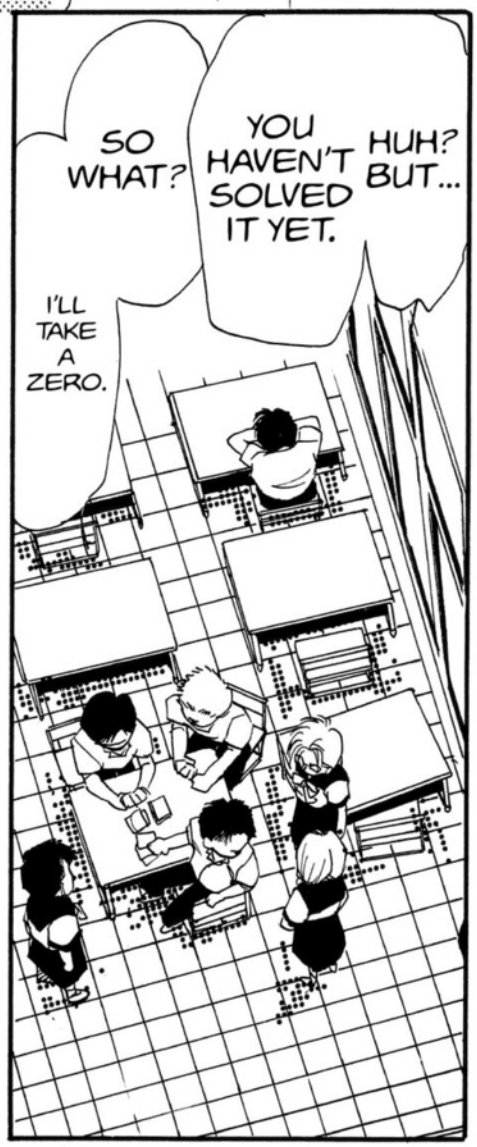

NO, NOT YET.
BUT...
...IT'S DUE TODAY.
I'M STILL WORKING ON THAT FORMULA.
GRR

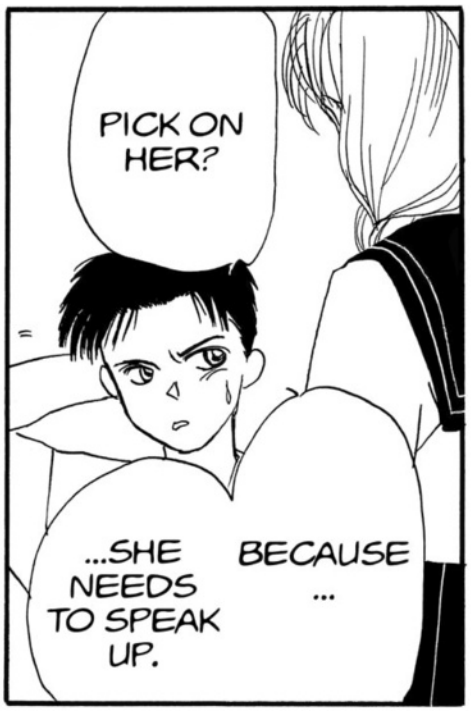
I CAN'T HELP IT! I'M NOT FINISHED!!
TWITCH
!!

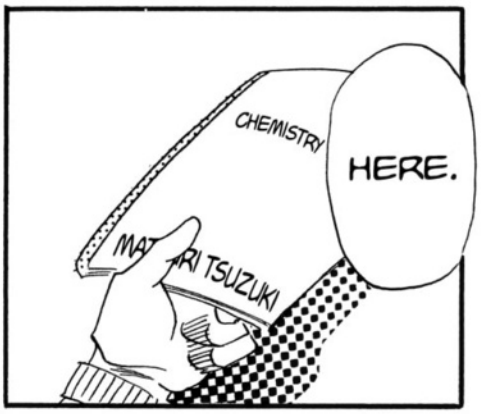
SHE'S GONNA CRY.
OH NO...

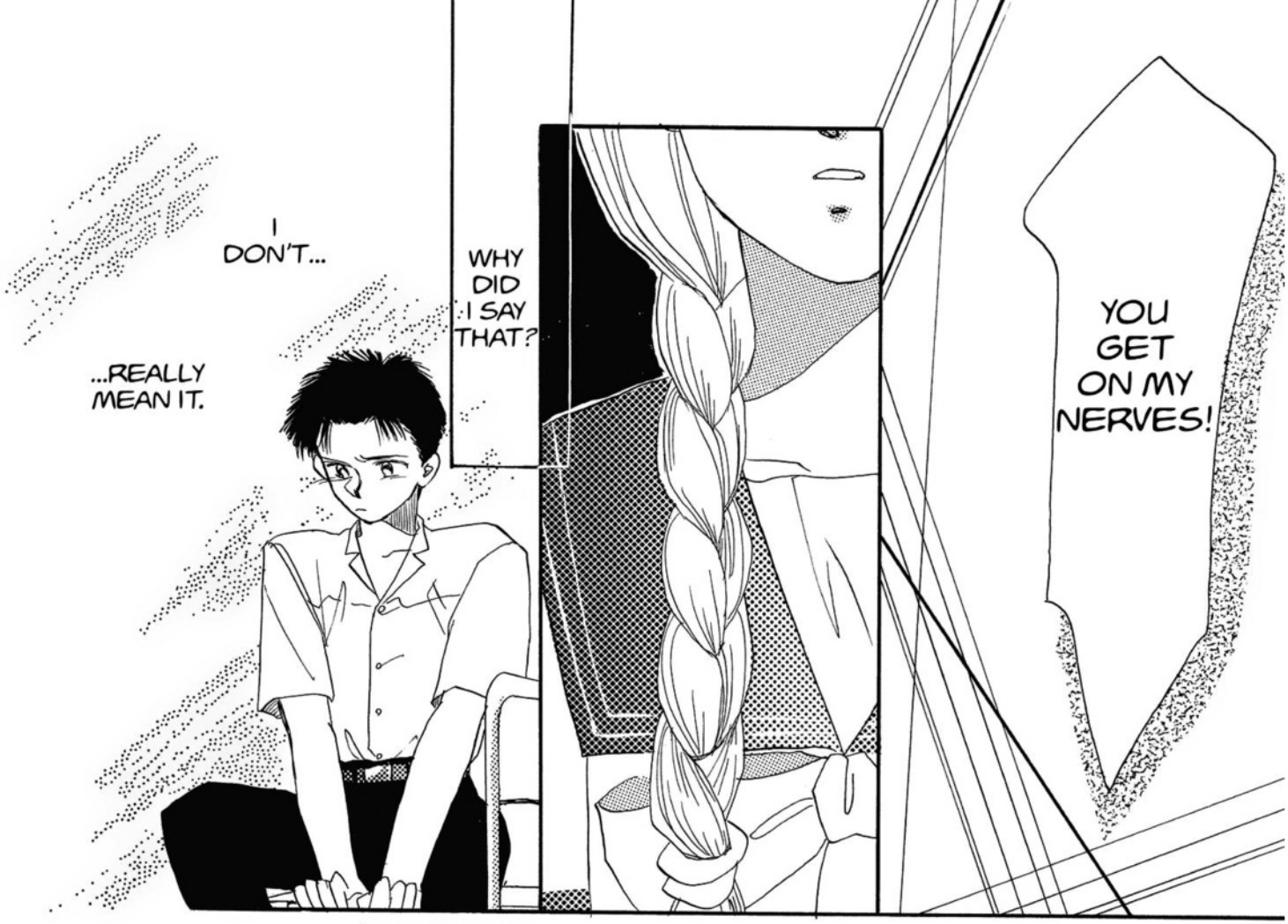

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS PICK ON SAKURA?
THAT HURT! AND THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, ANYWAY!
TSUZUKI, YOU JERK!!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
KA-WHAK
OW

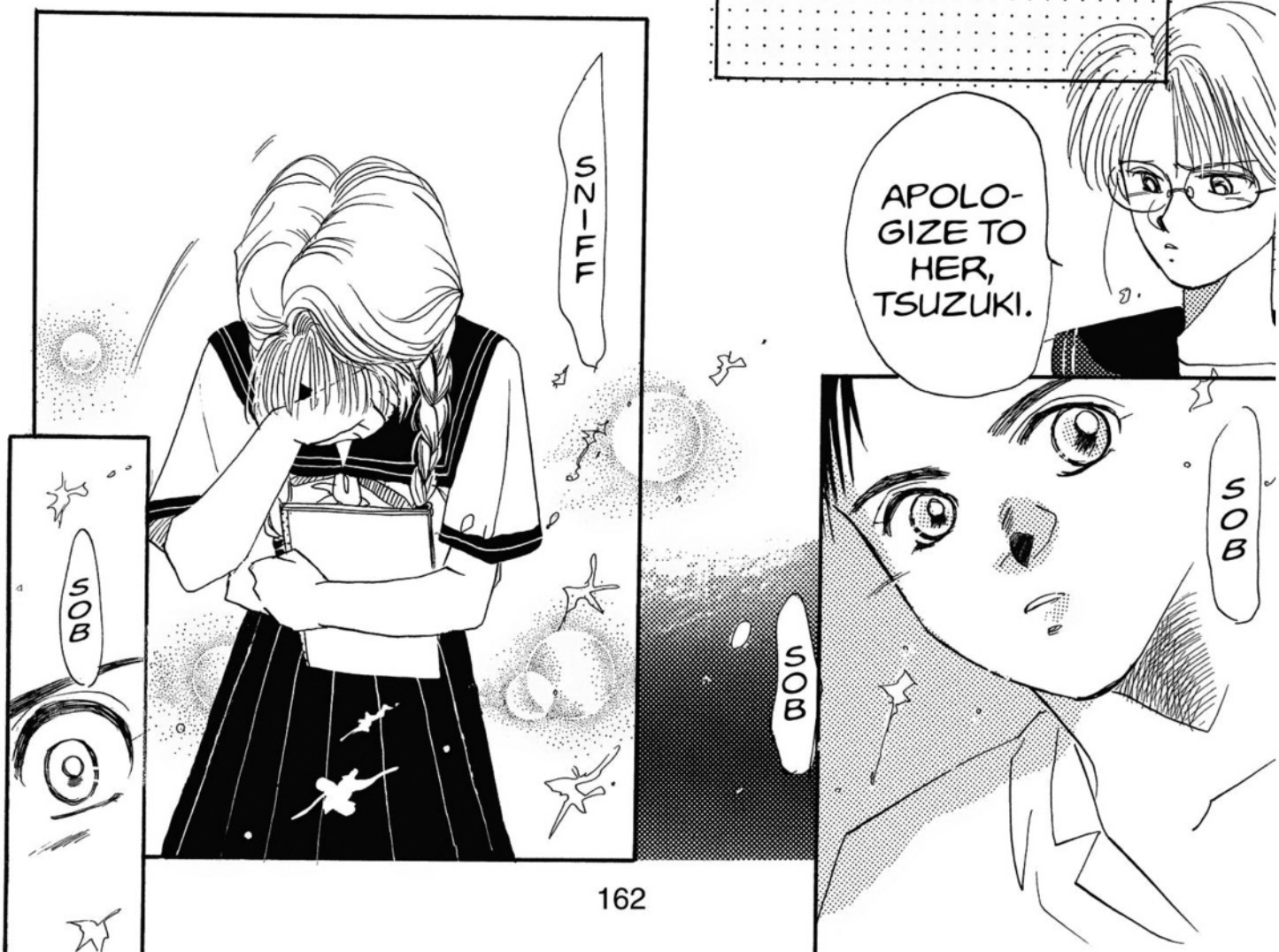
MAIDA ...
...SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.


SO WHAT?
YOU HAVEN'T SOLVED IT YET.
HUH? BUT...
I'LL TAKE A ZERO.


PICK ON HER?
...SHE NEEDS TO SPEAK UP.
BECAUSE ...


CHEMISTRY
HERE.
MATARI TSUZUKI


I DON'T...
...REALLY MEAN IT.
WHY DID I SAY THAT?
YOU GET ON MY NERVES!


SNIFF
SOB
SOB
SOB
APOLO-GIZE TO HER, TSUZUKI.

ZING
I DID IT AGAIN.
I MADE HER CRY AGAIN.
GEEZ...
SHUCK
TSUZUKI, WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN TO MAIDA?
BUTTX
?
...
WHY?
I THOUGHT...
...AND SAW...

...
AN IMAGE?
WHAT IMAGE?
I HAVE AN IMAGE OF HER IN MY HEAD.
...A SIMPLE AFTER-IMAGE.
I KNOW WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO...
...BUT EVERYTHING ALWAYS TURNS OUT WRONG.
HUH?
Um... IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.
I HATE THE WAY I AM.

UGH...
IT'S MAIDA.
STOP CHECKING OUT THE GIRLS AND RUN, TSUZUKI!
NAKANISHI!
WHUP
I'M NOT CHECKING HER OUT!
WHO?
TMPTMPTMP
FIGHT!
RAH!
FIGHT!
TMP TMP TMP
...
WHICH GIRL IS IT?

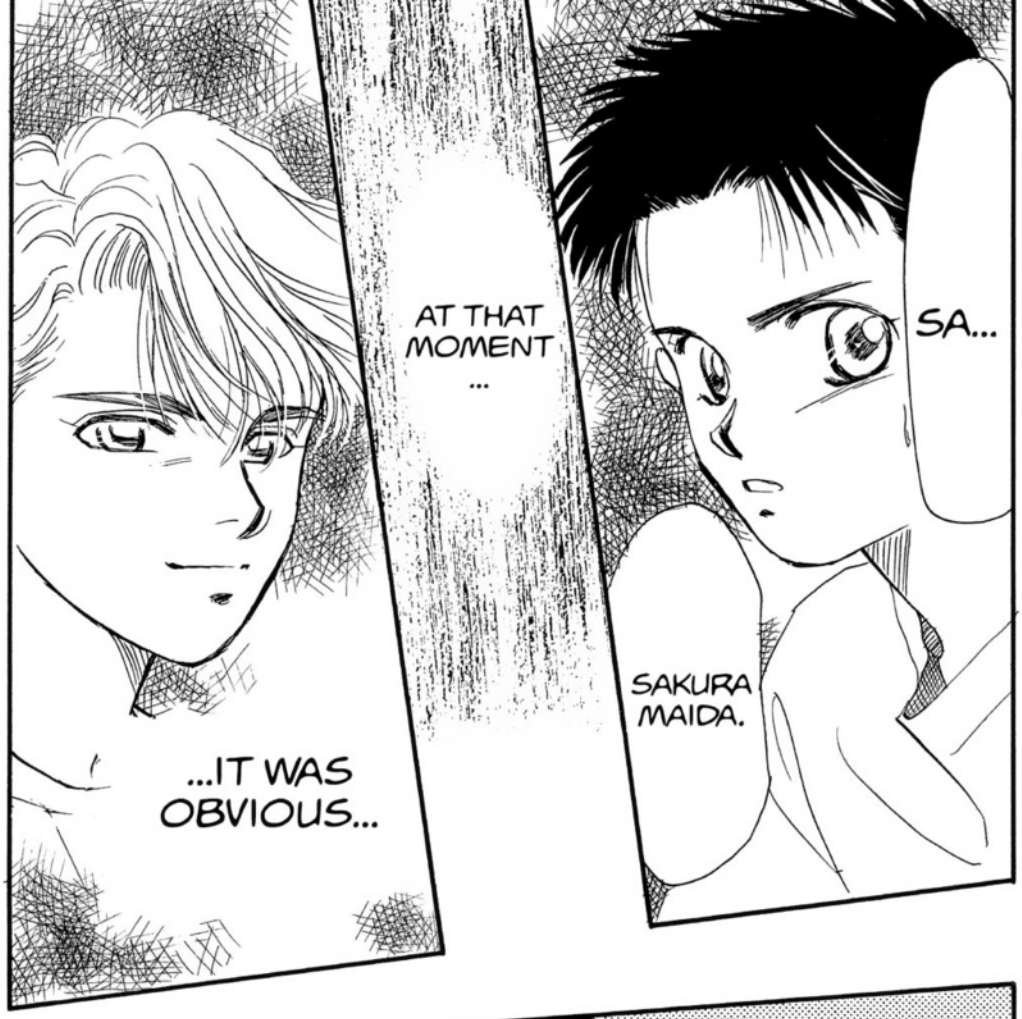
C-CUTE?
BDMP
YOU DON'T KNOW HER LIKE I DO!
HEY, SHE'S CUTE.
UM... WELL... THE ONE IN THE MIDDLE.
WHICH GIRL WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
FIGHT!
RAH!
HUH?
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
FIGHT!
RAH!
SHE CRIES OVER NOTHING!
AND SHE ACTS LIKE A TOTAL WIMP!
I-I'VE KNOWN HER SINCE GRADE SCHOOL!
WHAT'S HER NAME?
SHOOK
OH YEAH?
SO...
SHE'S NOT CUTE AT ALL!

Author's Note Part 6

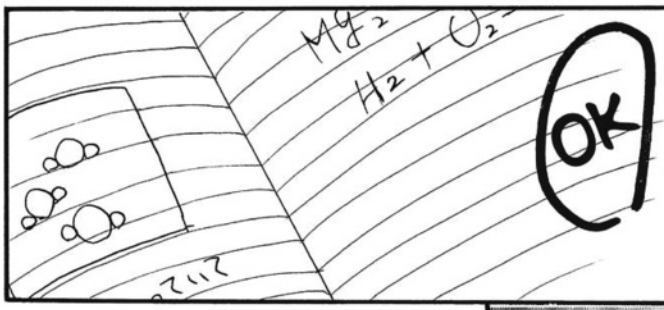
On a Beehive (2)

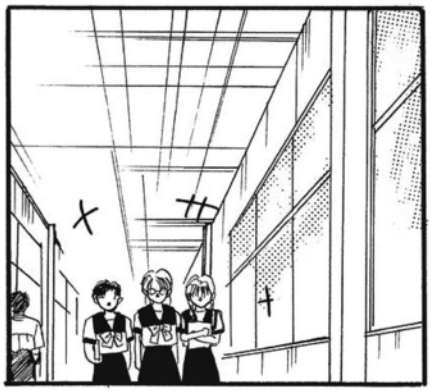
The remaining bee continued to guard the hive. I went back to see how it was doing every day.
A week passed and the other bee still hadn't come back. The remaining bee seemed to be getting weaker. Then, after a week and a half, that bee disappeared too. All that was left was the shabby little beehive, which had dried up and looked even worse than when we first found it.
A few days later, the hive itself was gone. Maybe it was blown away by the wind, or maybe someone took it. It made me think about the harshness of nature. When I mentioned that to my assistants, S said, "Bees make their hives in the same spot every year. We had one on our house for a while, and it drove my mother crazy. You're lucky it's gone."
I guess being safe is the most important thing. That's what I learned from the incident.

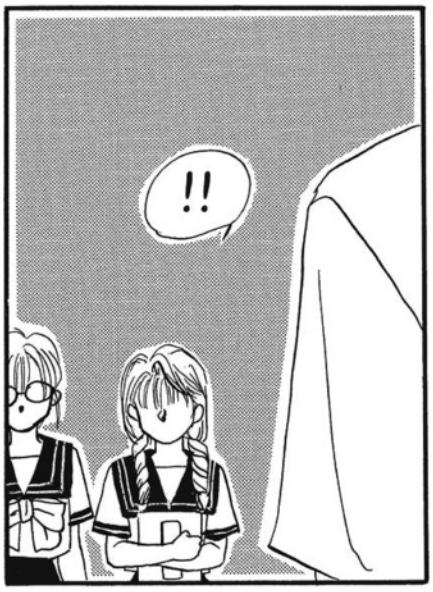
See you in volume 16!
Marimo



I'M RETURNING YOUR CHEMISTRY NOTEBOOKS.
IF YOU DIDN'T GET IT RIGHT, WRITE THE FORMULA CORRECTLY 10 TIMES AND SHOW IT TO ME.
WUZZZ
WUZZZ
GEEZ, THAT STINKS!
KITAMURA.
UEDA.
ISHII.


OK

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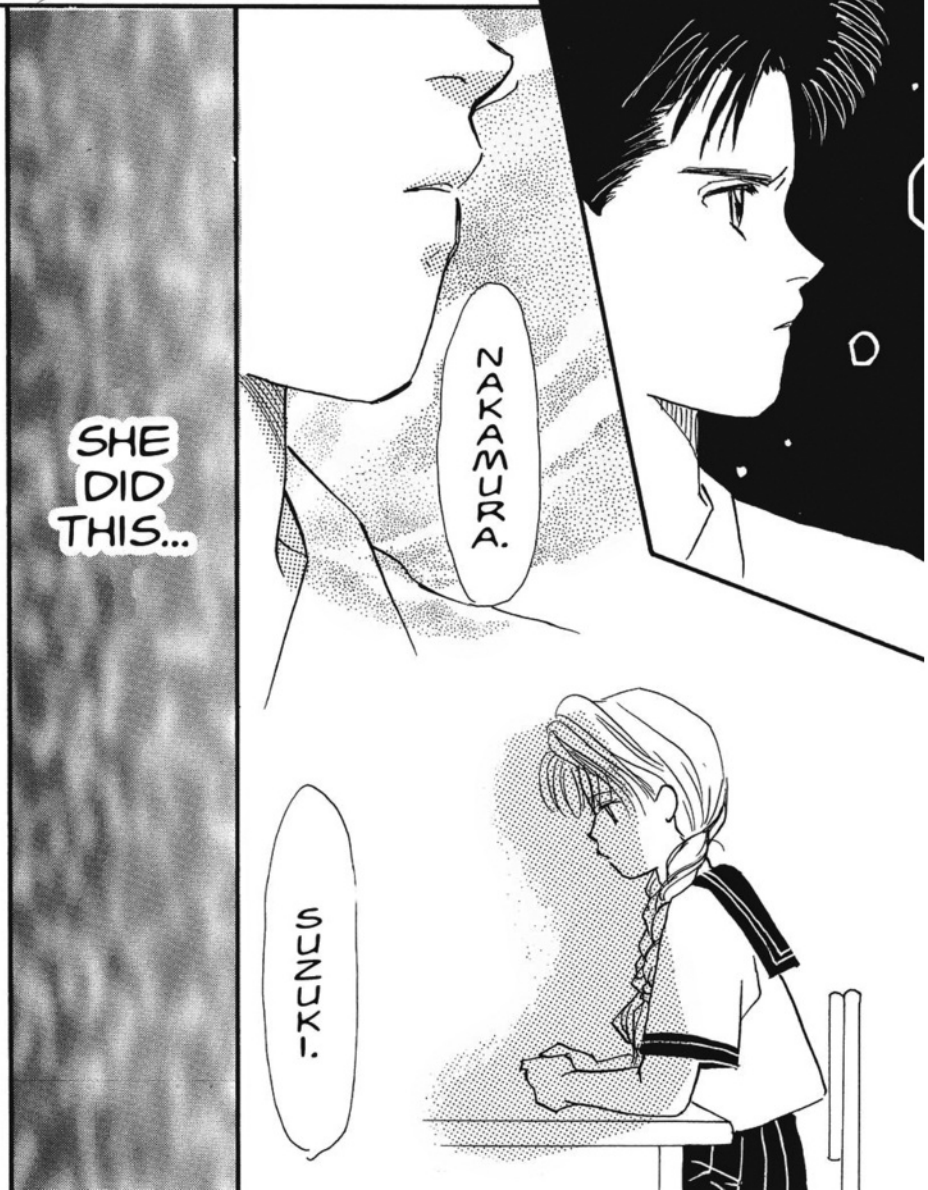

SHE DID THIS...
NAKAMURA.
SUZUKI.

...DID YOU DO THIS?
WHY...
MAIDA...
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.
YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T FINISHED.
WHY?
STARE
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT!
GRR

DID I...
...ASK YOU TO DO THAT FOR ME?
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO TICK ME OFF?

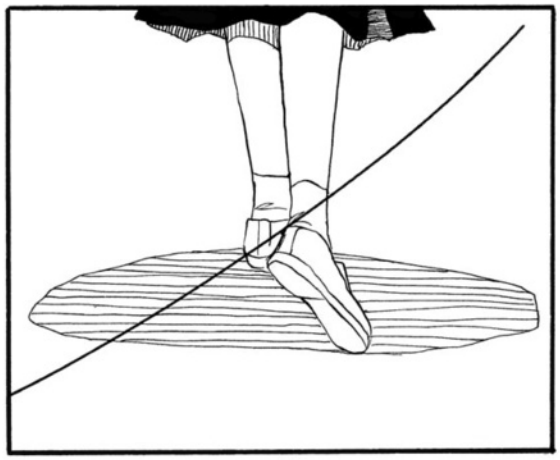
SHE ONLY DID IT SO YOU'D LIKE HER MORE, YOU DUMB JERK!
SHUT UP! THIS WAS HER WAY OF MOCKING ME!!
LEAVE HER ALONE, TSUZUKI!

LOOK.

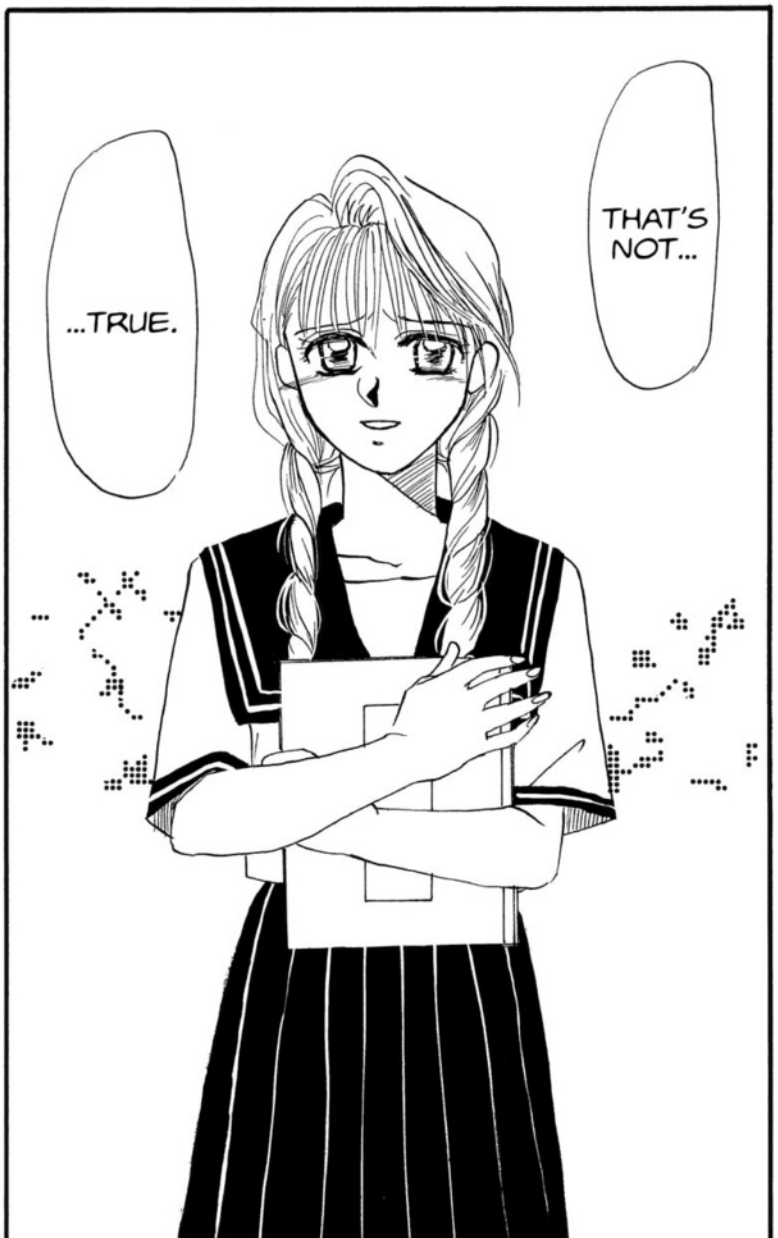
SHE THINKS SHE CAN SOLVE ALL HER PROBLEMS BY **CRYING.**

TSUZUKI...

THAT'S THE WHOLE PRO-BLEM!



SAKURA...

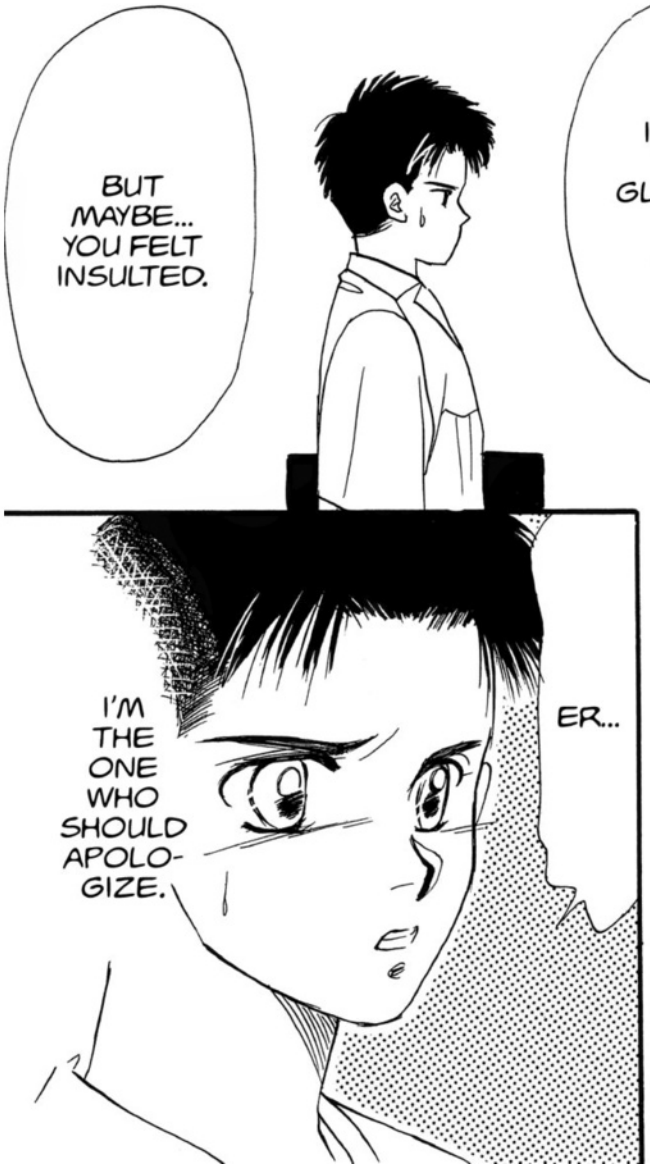

THAT'S NOT...
...TRUE.

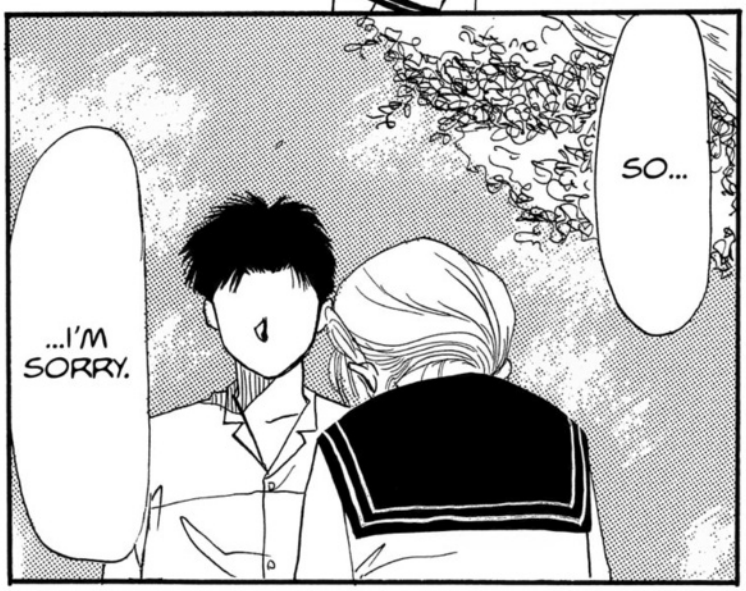
SAKURA!
REEE
REEE
REEE
REEE
REEE
IT'S SO HOT.
REE
REEE
REE

GUYS ARE COM-PLICATED, HUH?

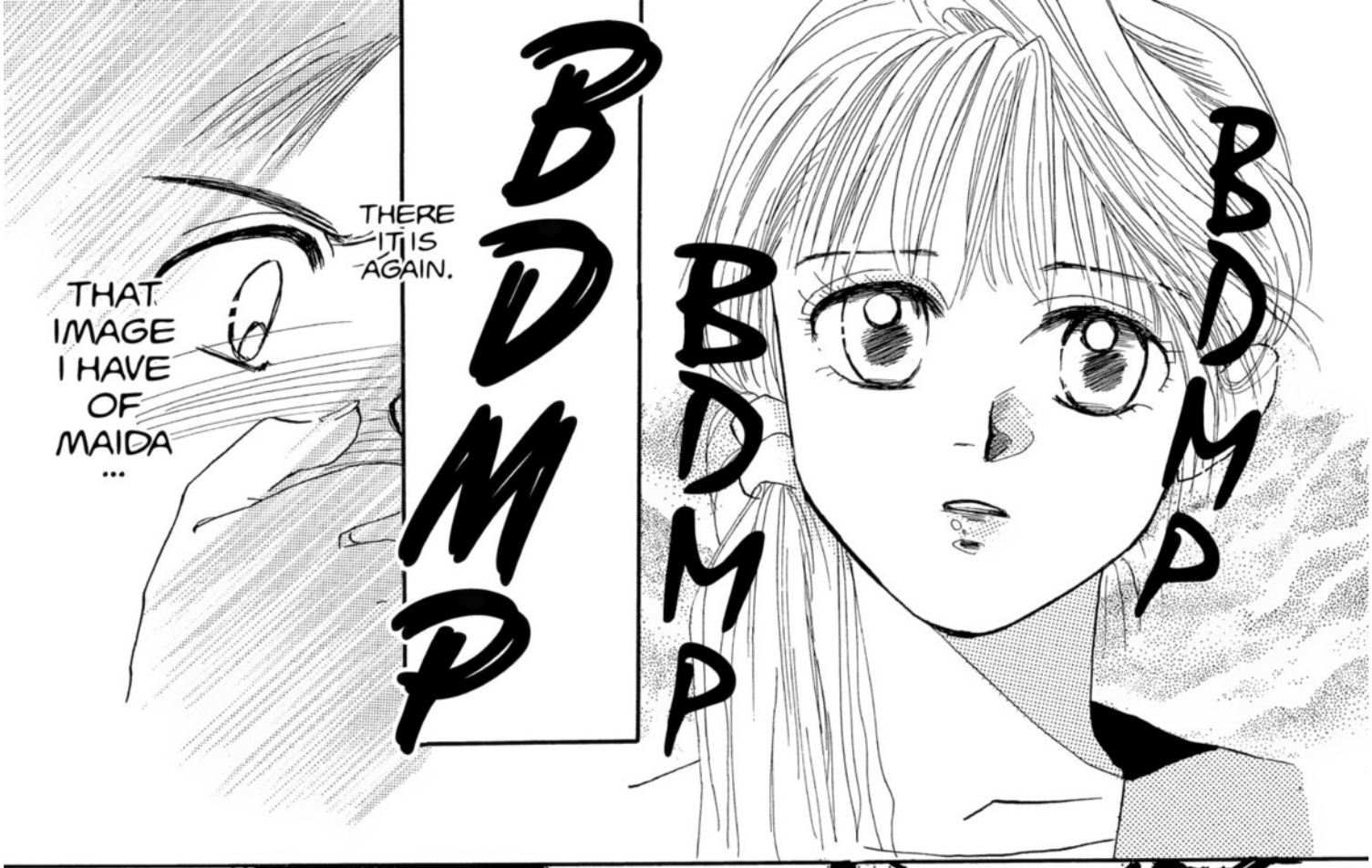
HUH?

I'M SORRY, TSUZUKI.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

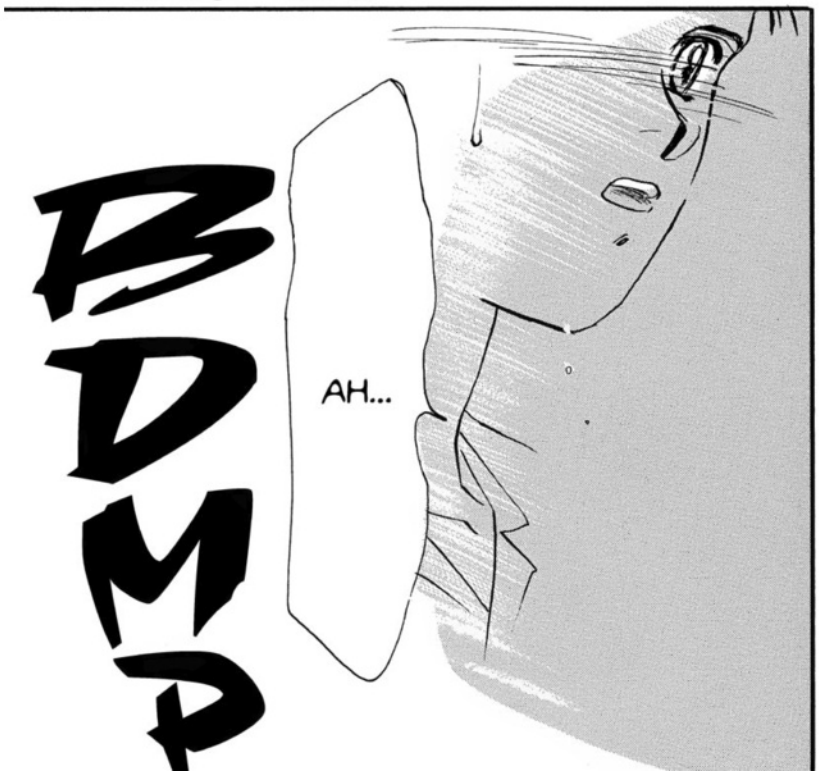

BUT MAYBE... YOU FELT INSULTED.
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE GLAD I WROTE IN THE ANSWER.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D GET MAD AT ME FOR WHAT I DID.
ER...
I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD APOLO-GIZE.

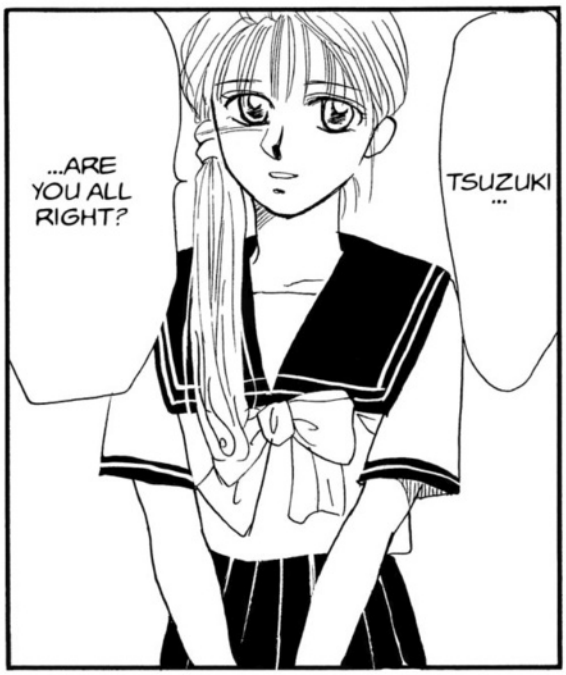

SO...
...I'M SORRY.

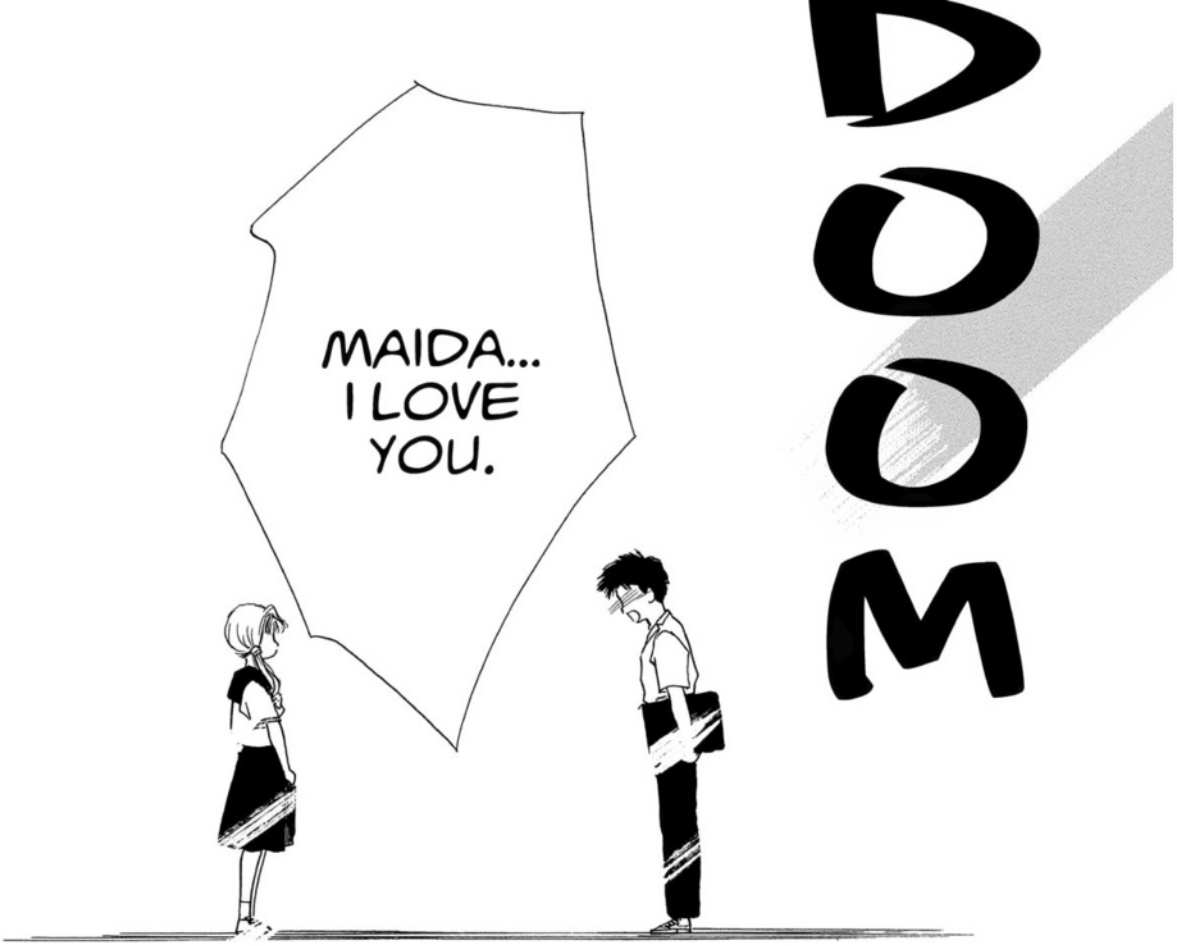
I WAS JUST FRUSTRATED BY THE WHOLE SITUATION.
I NEVER WANTED TO PICK ON HER.
I PRACTICALLY ASKED HER TO WRITE IN THE ANSWER FOR ME.
I DIDN'T FEEL INSULTED.
I...
I...
I WAS THE ONE WHO INSULTED HER!
KRK
BDMP
BDMP

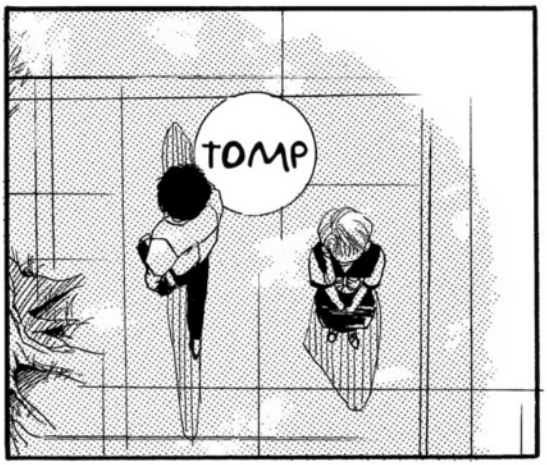

THAT IMAGE I HAVE OF MAIDA ...
THERE IT IS AGAIN.
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP

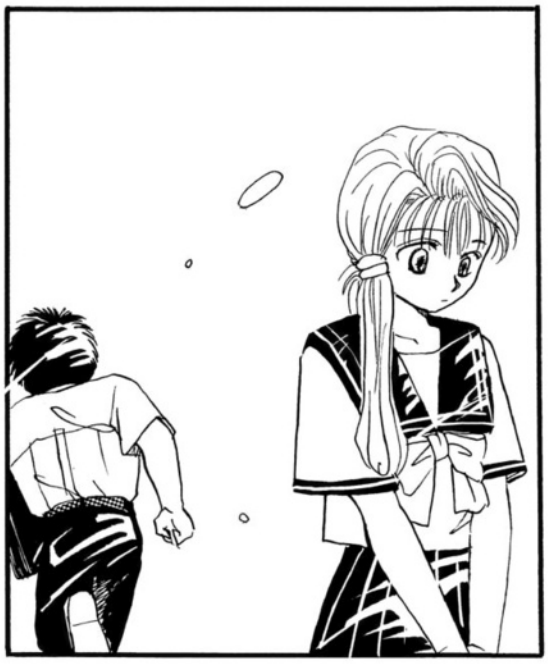
...MAKES MY BRAIN SHUT DOWN!
BDMP BDMP BDMP

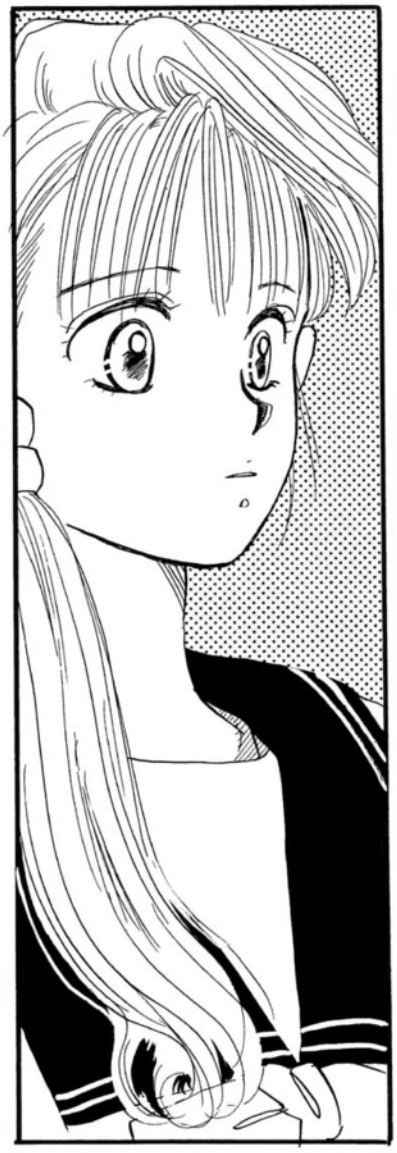

AH...
BDMP


...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
TSUZUKI ...


DOOM
MAIDA... I LOVE YOU.

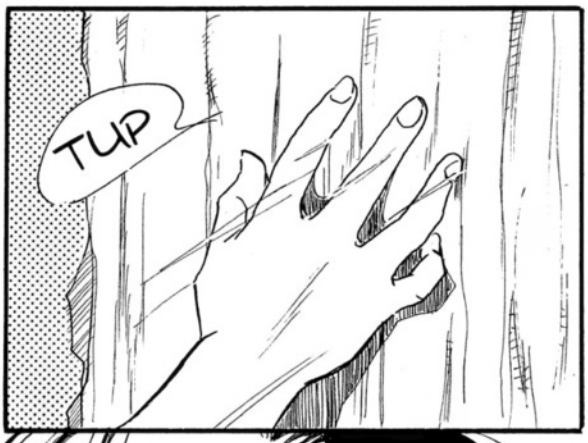

TOMP



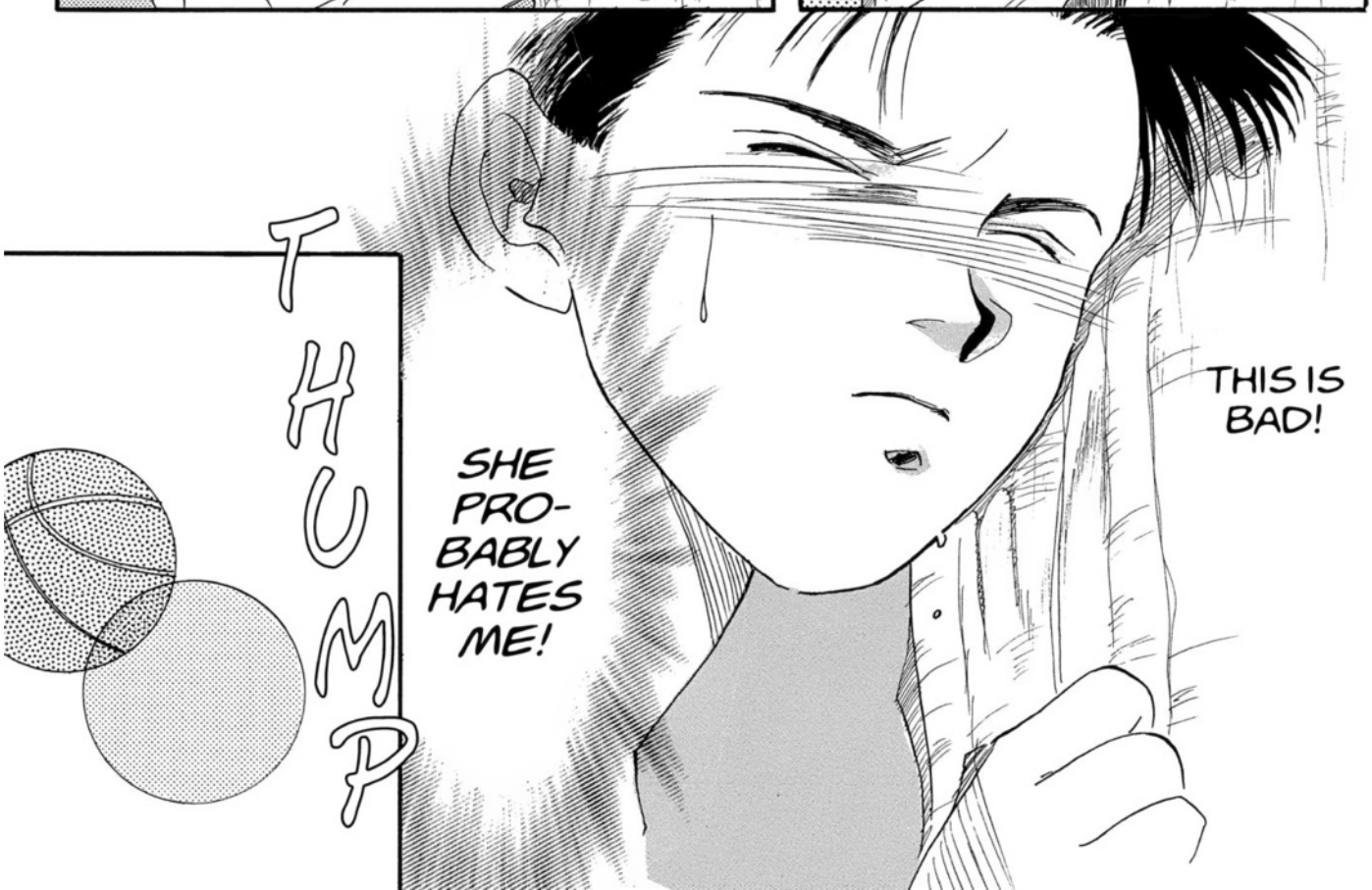


...

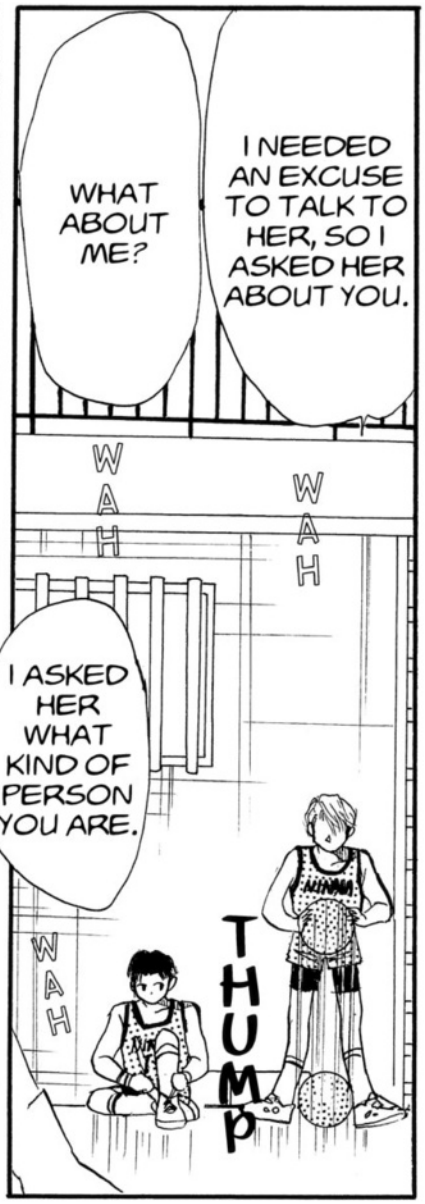
WHAT DID I DO?
WHAT DID I DO?


TUP

BDMP
I TOLD HER!
BDMP


THIS IS BAD!
SHE PROBABLY HATES ME!
THUMP

AND SHE TOLD YOU I WAS A JERK, RIGHT?

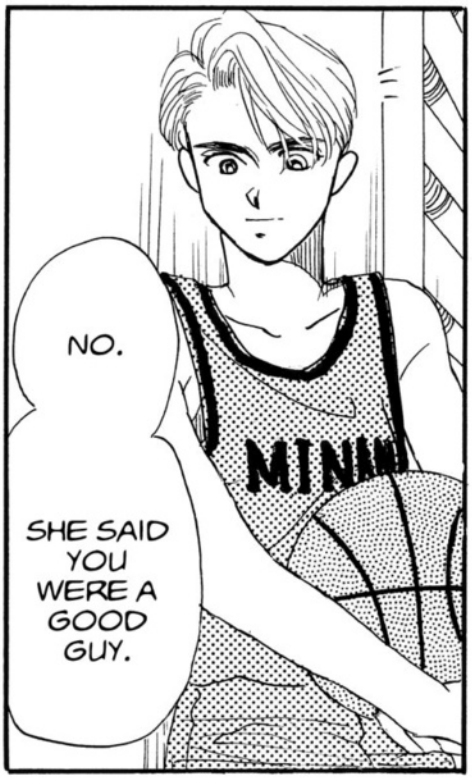

WHAT ABOUT ME?
I NEEDED AN EXCUSE TO TALK TO HER, SO I ASKED HER ABOUT YOU.
WAH
WAH
I ASKED HER WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE.
WAH
THUMP

HEY, TSUZUKI, I TALKED TO MAIDA TODAY.
MINAMI
4

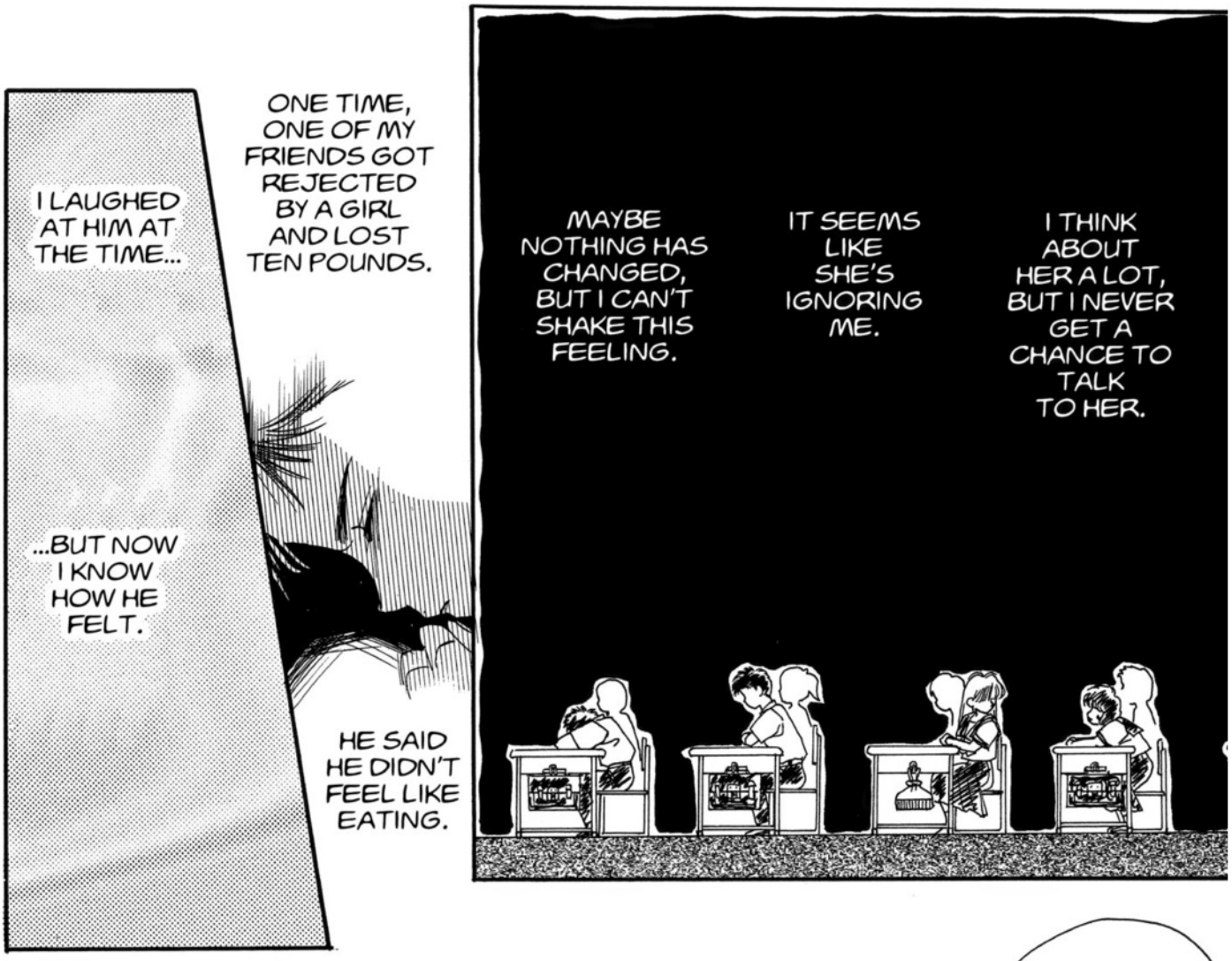
WAH
THUMP
THUMP

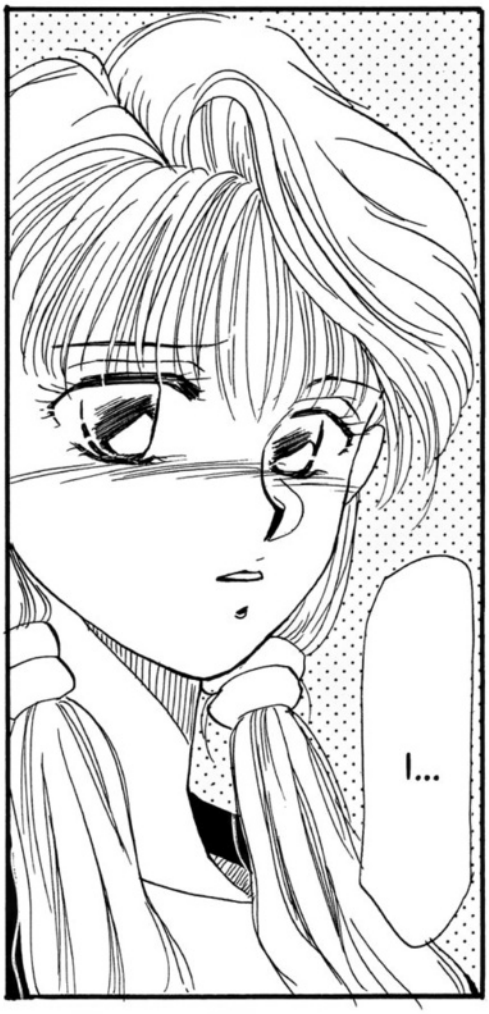
LATER.

SHE'S AS NICE AS SHE LOOKS.
AND CUTE.


NO.
SHE SAID YOU WERE A GOOD GUY.
MINAMI

SHE'S ALWAYS SO TIMID AROUND ME...
YOU DON'T CARE IF I GO AFTER HER, DO YOU?
...BUT SHE SEEMED TOTALLY RELAXED WHEN SHE WAS TALKING TO NAKANISHI.
LATER ...
WHAT'RE YOU ASKING ME FOR?
THAT'S YOUR BUSI-NESS.
HIS OUTGOING PERSONALITY MUST HAVE PUT HER AT EASE.
THANKS.
THAT'S TRUE.
...I HAPPENED TO SEE HIM TALKING TO MAIDA.
BUT I DIDN'T LIKE SEEING THEM TOGETHER.
MINAMI
4

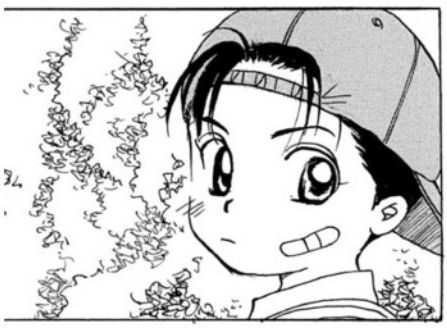

I LAUGHED AT HIM AT THE TIME...
ONE TIME, ONE OF MY FRIENDS GOT REJECTED BY A GIRL AND LOST TEN POUNDS.
...BUT NOW I KNOW HOW HE FELT.
HE SAID HE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE EATING.
MAYBE NOTHING HAS CHANGED, BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING.
IT SEEMS LIKE SHE'S IGNORING ME.
I THINK ABOUT HER A LOT, BUT I NEVER GET A CHANCE TO TALK TO HER.


I...

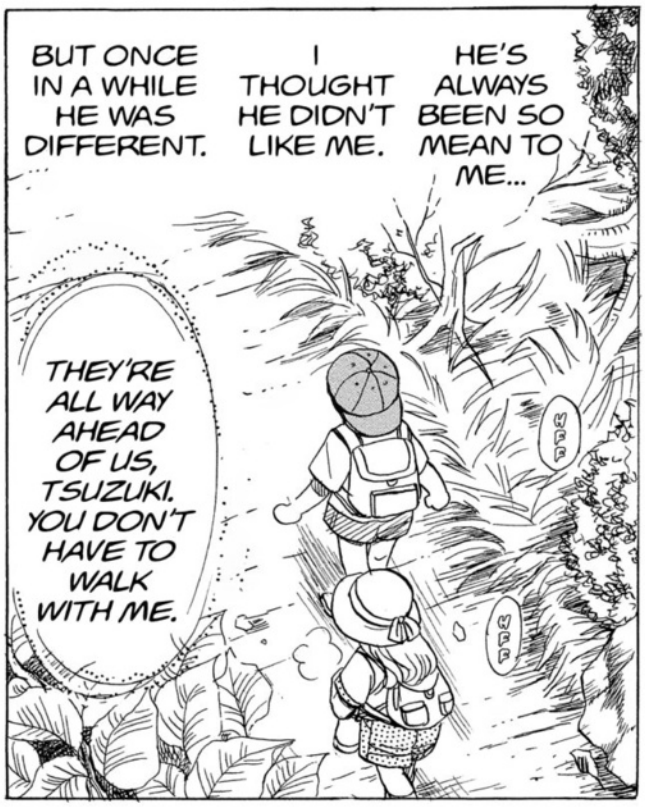
BUT AT LEAST HE'S NOT TORTURING YOU ANYMORE, SAKURA.
THAT'S NOT HEALTHY.

TSUZUKI SEEMS DEPRESSED LATELY.
GLOOM
THERE'S A DARK CLOUD ABOVE HIM.
WHAT'S BOTH-ERING HIM?

...I LOVE YOU.
...BUT MY HEART IS STILL THROB-BING.
I...
...DON'T KNOW WHY...
...HE RAN AWAY. NOW I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK.
BUT ...
MAIDA ...

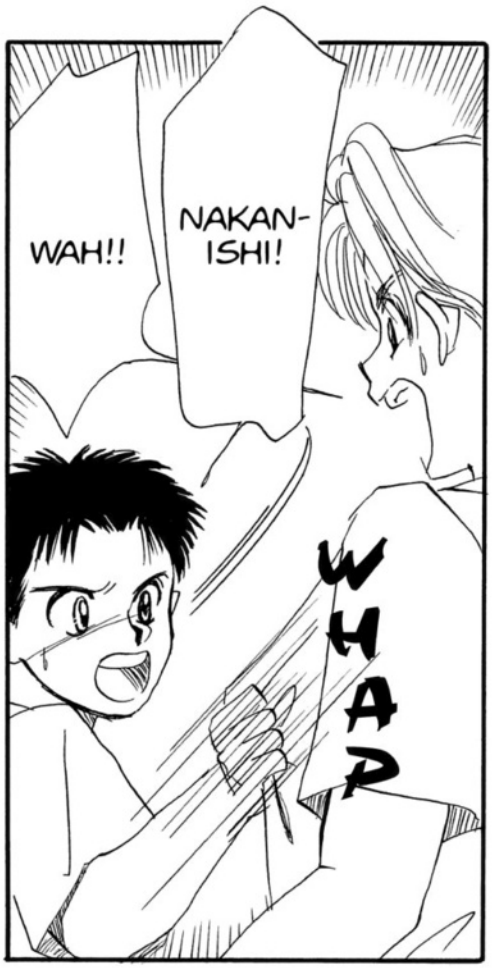


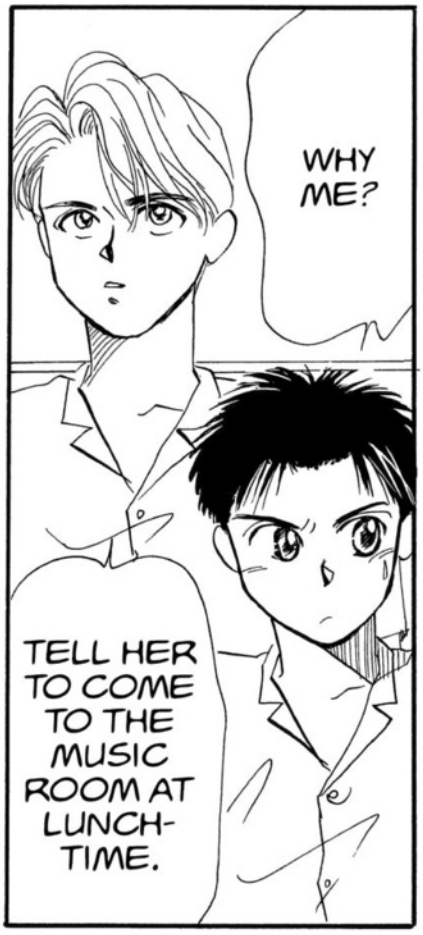
I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR YOU. I JUST FEEL LIKE TAKING IT EASY.

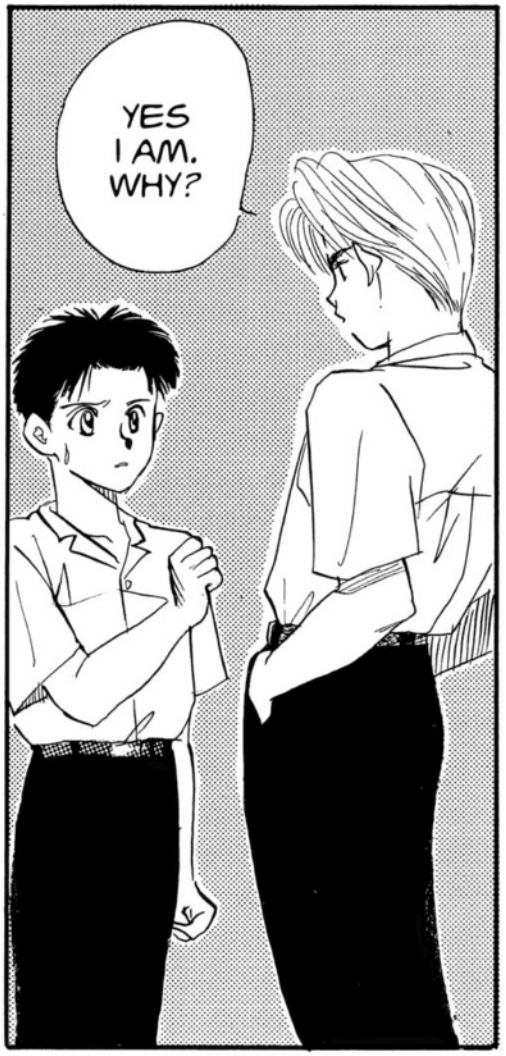

BUT ONCE IN A WHILE HE WAS DIFFERENT.
I THOUGHT HE DIDN'T LIKE ME.
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SO MEAN TO ME...
THEY'RE ALL WAY AHEAD OF US, TSUZUKI. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK WITH ME.

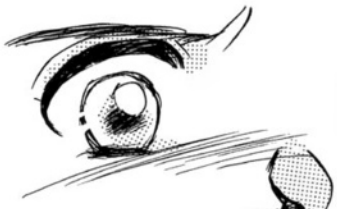
DID HE MEAN IT?
WAS HE JOKING?

TSUZUKI!
I LEARNED THINGS ABOUT TSUZUKI...
...I NEVER KNEW.
AN OLDER BOY FROM TSUZUKI'S CLUB CAME TO TALK TO ME THE OTHER DAY.
...
HE SURPRISED ME, BUT HE WAS VERY NICE.
HE TALKED TO ME ABOUT TSUZUKI.
HUH?
WILL YOU GIVE MAIDA A MESSAGE FOR ME?
I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU.
WHAT?









BE-CAUSE...

...SHE HASN'T SPOKEN TO ME SINCE THAT DAY.

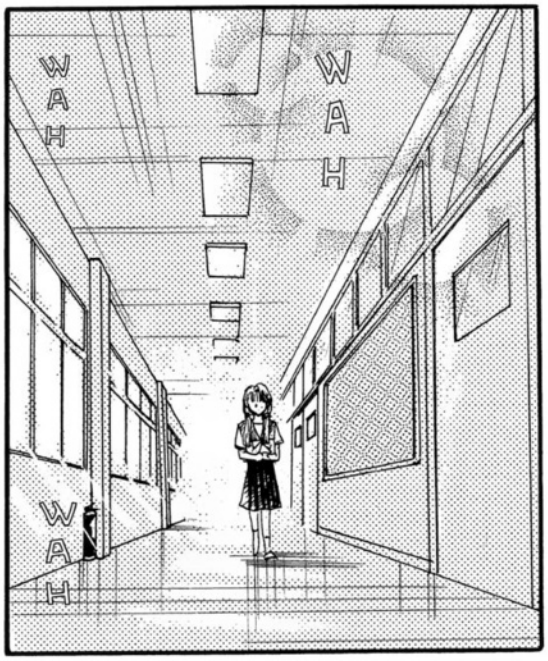
KSHH

I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE FEELS ABOUT ME YET.

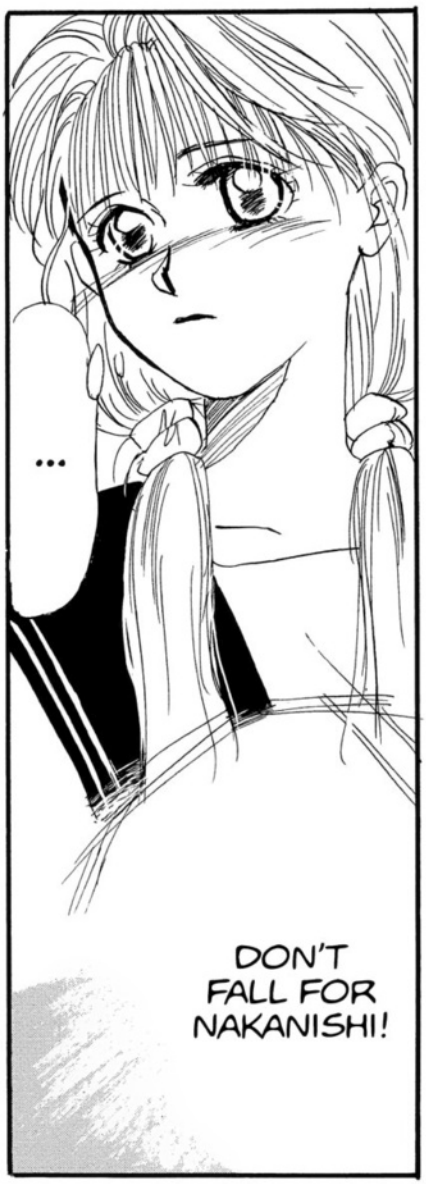
MAIDA ...

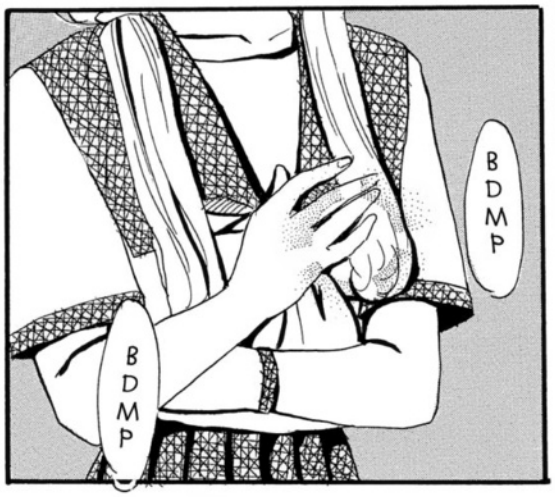
WILL YOU GO TO THE MUSIC ROOM DURING LUNCH?
PLEASE...

WH-WHAT?
B D M P
HUH?
LISTEN.
KSHHH

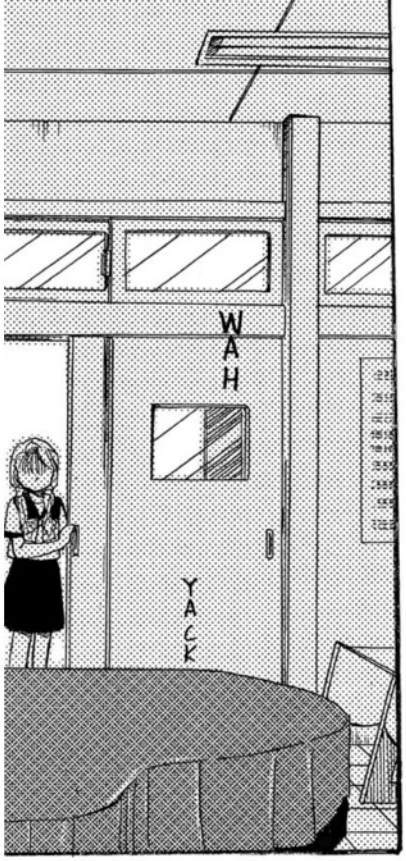

WAH
WAH
WAH

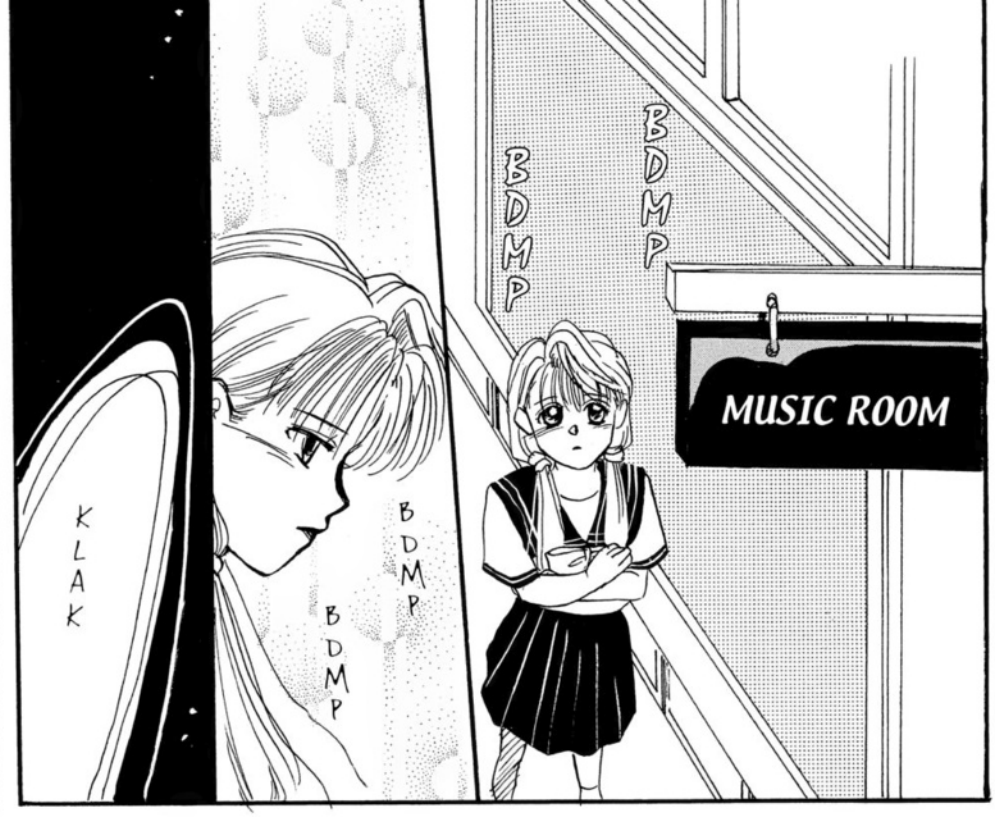
NAKA-NISHI!
SORRY ...

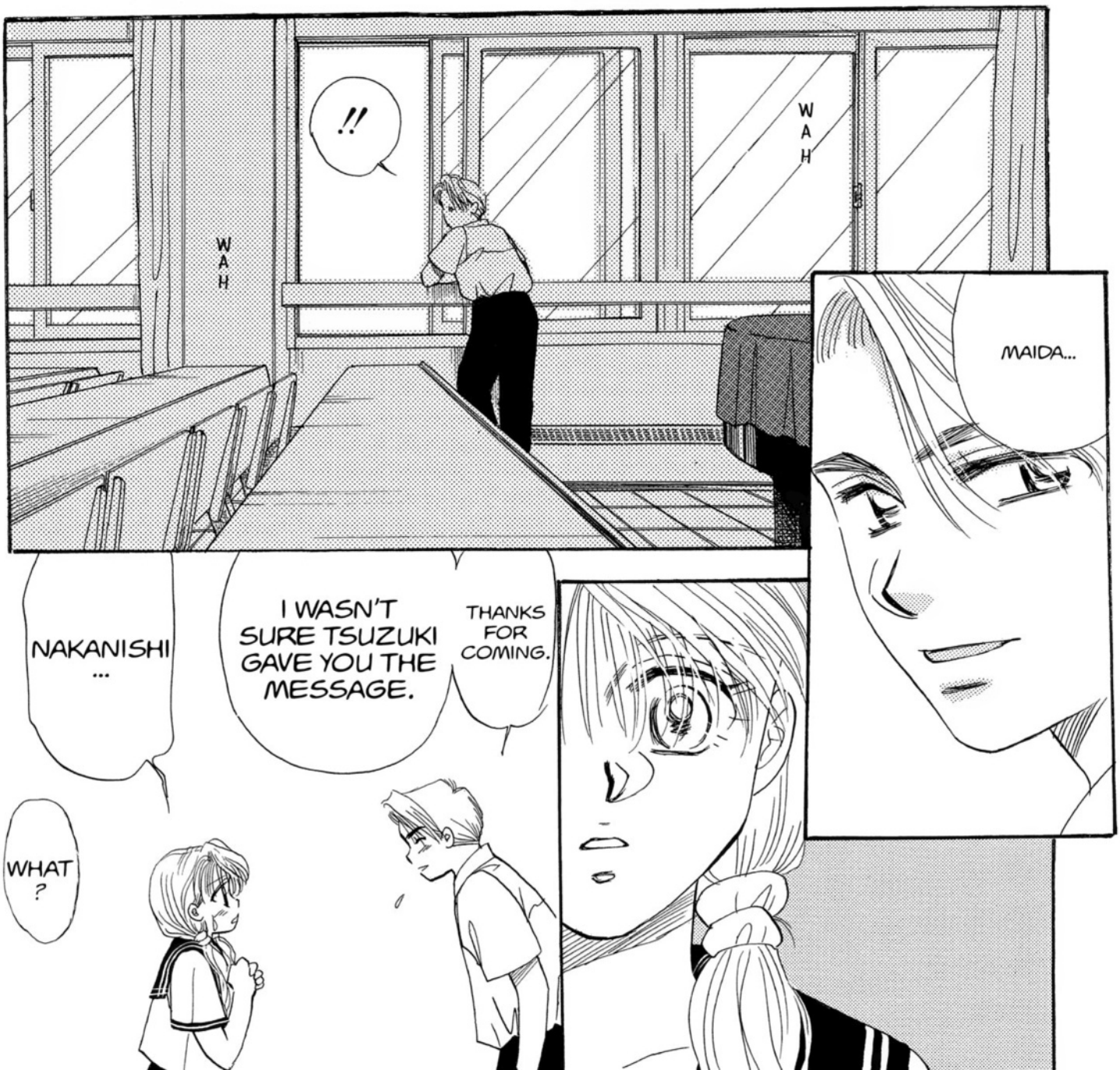

...
DON'T FALL FOR NAKANISHI!

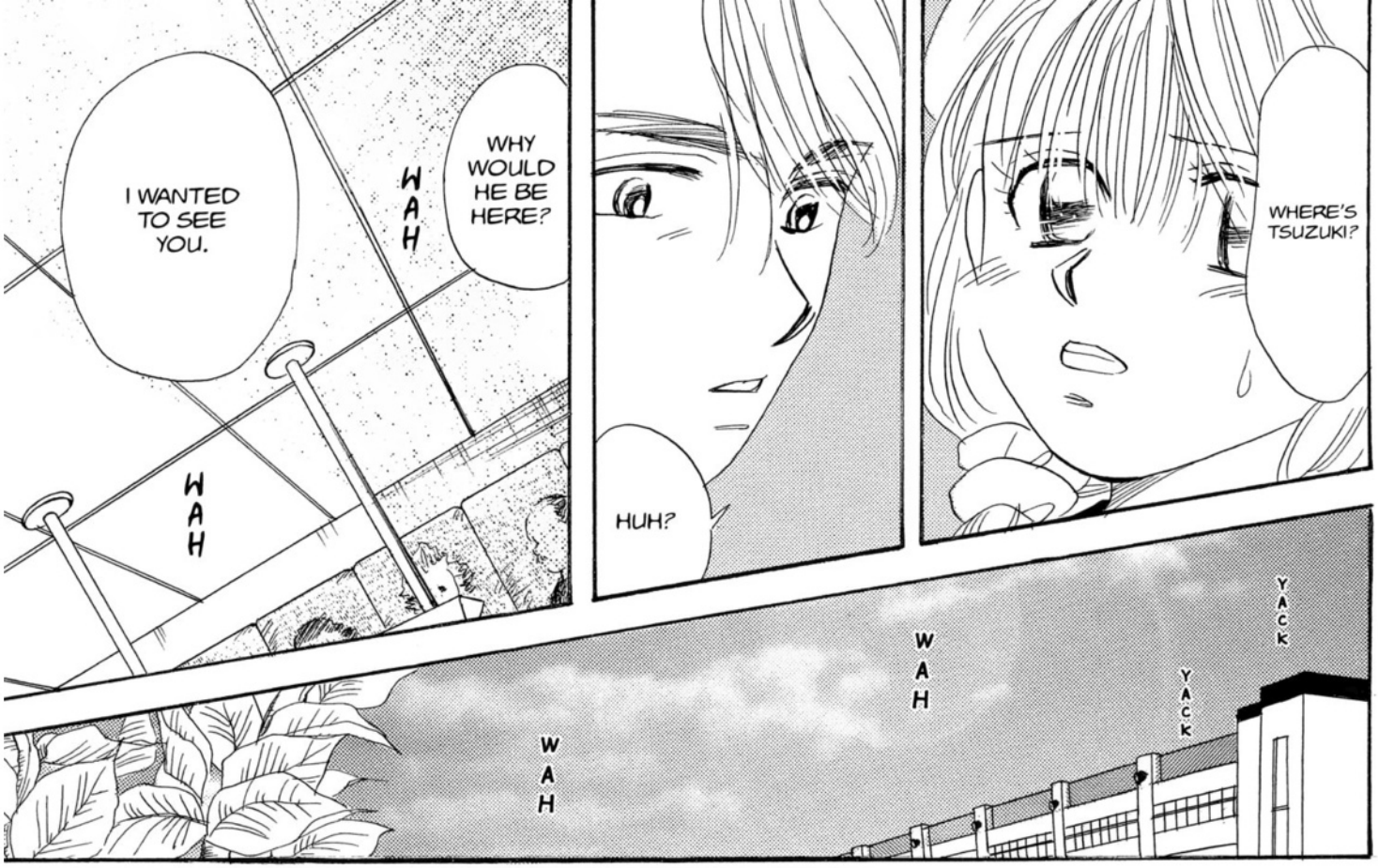

B D M P
B D M P

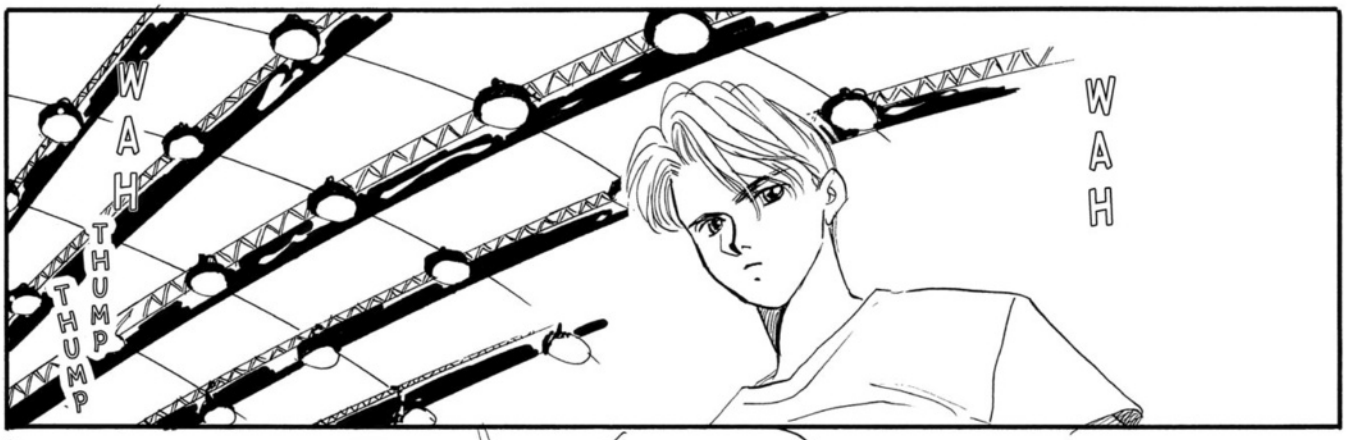
...BUT I HOPE YOU CRASH AND BURN.


WAH
YACK


KLAK
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
MUSIC ROOM


!!
WAH
WAH
MAIDA...
NAKANISHI ...
I WASN'T SURE TSUZUKI GAVE YOU THE MESSAGE.
THANKS FOR COMING.
WHAT ?

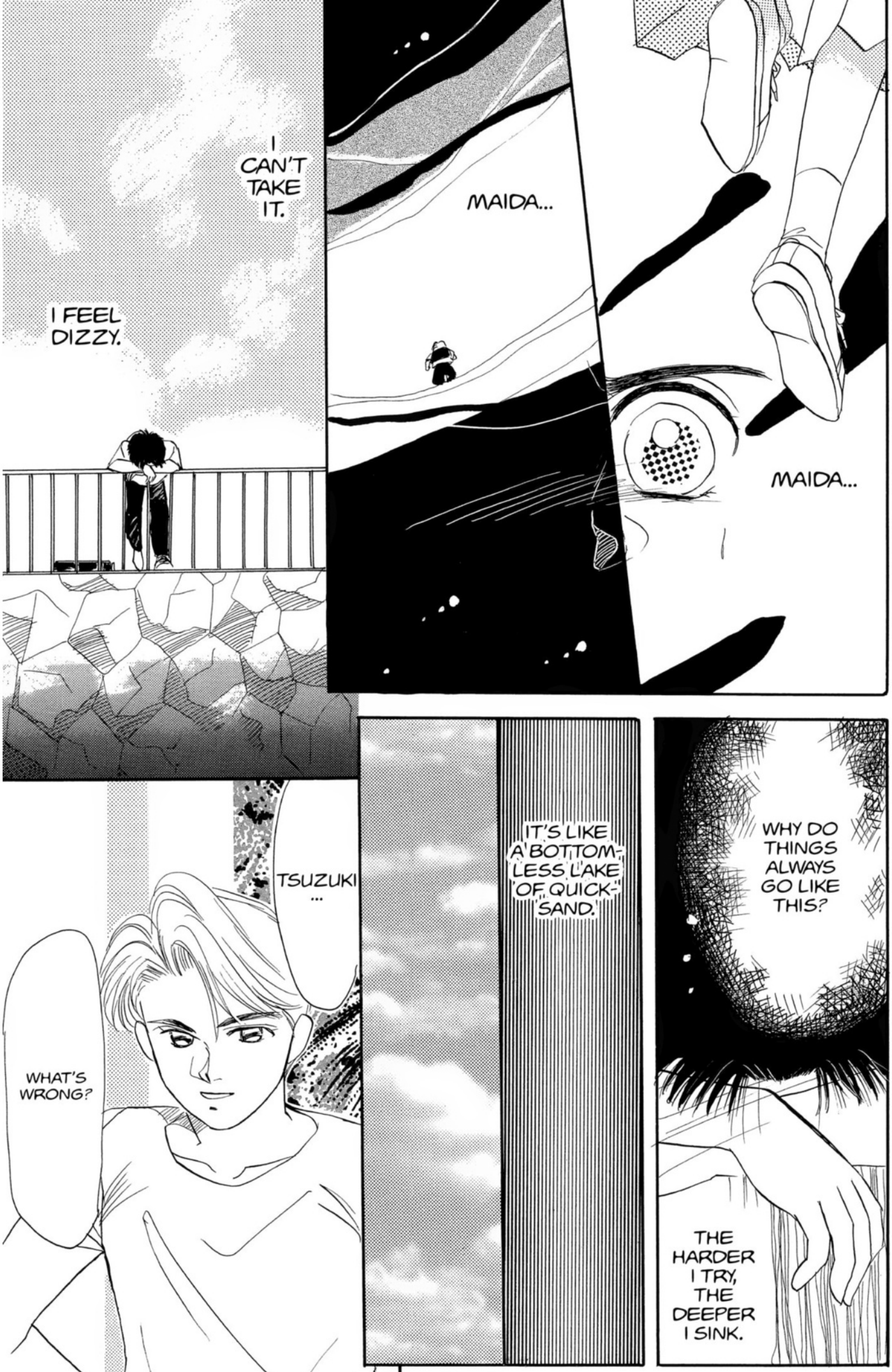

WHERE'S TSUZUKI?
HUH?
WHY WOULD HE BE HERE?
I WANTED TO SEE YOU.
WAH
WAH
WAH
WAH
WAH
YACK
YACK

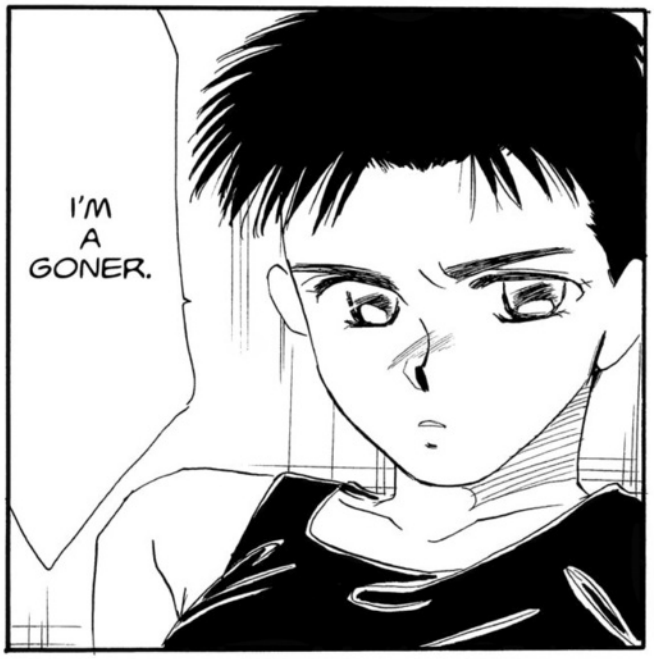

WAH
WAH
THUMP
THUMP

HEY, WHERE'S TSUZUKI?
THUD
HE WENT HOME. SAID HE WASN'T FEELING WELL.
HMPH. MUST BE LOVE-SICKNESS.
TSUZUKI...

MAIDA...
DON'T DO THAT ANY-MORE.
WHAT?
IT MADE MY HEART POUND...
...BUT...
...

WHY DID YOU TELL ME YOU LOVED ME?
IT WAS A JOKE, WASN'T IT?
N...
...
NO!!
I'M SICK OF THIS.
STAY AWAY FROM ME...
...BEFORE I LOSE FAITH IN YOU!

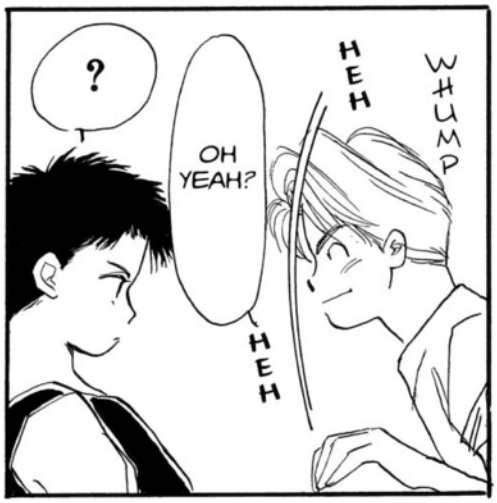

I CAN'T TAKE IT.
I FEEL DIZZY.
MAIDA...
MAIDA...
TSUZUKI ...
WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S LIKE A BOTTOMLESS LAKE OF QUICKSAND.
WHY DO THINGS ALWAYS GO LIKE THIS?
THE HARDER I TRY, THE DEEPER I SINK.


I'M A GONER.

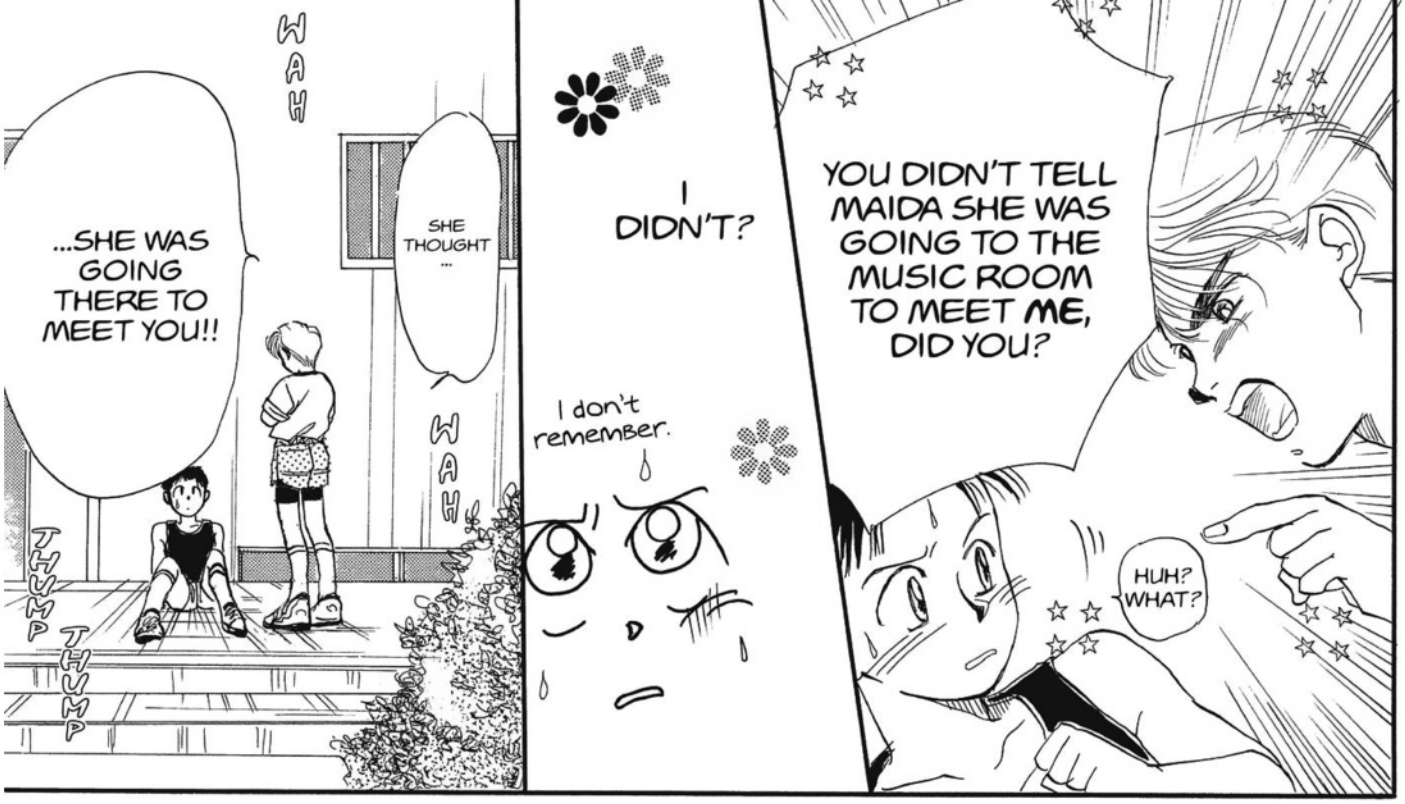
...
WAH
LEAVE ME ALONE.
WAH

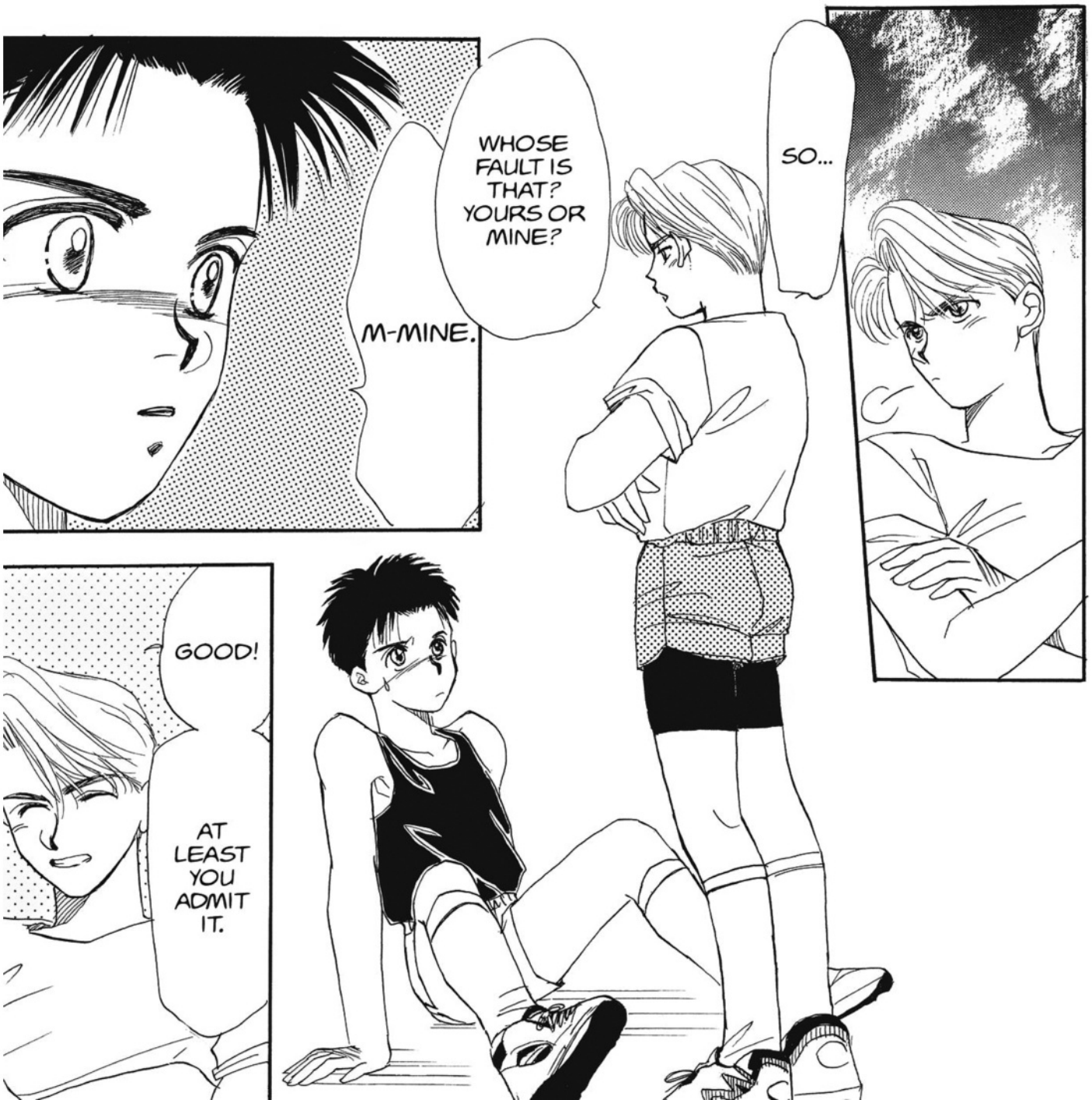
THAT HURT!
HUH?

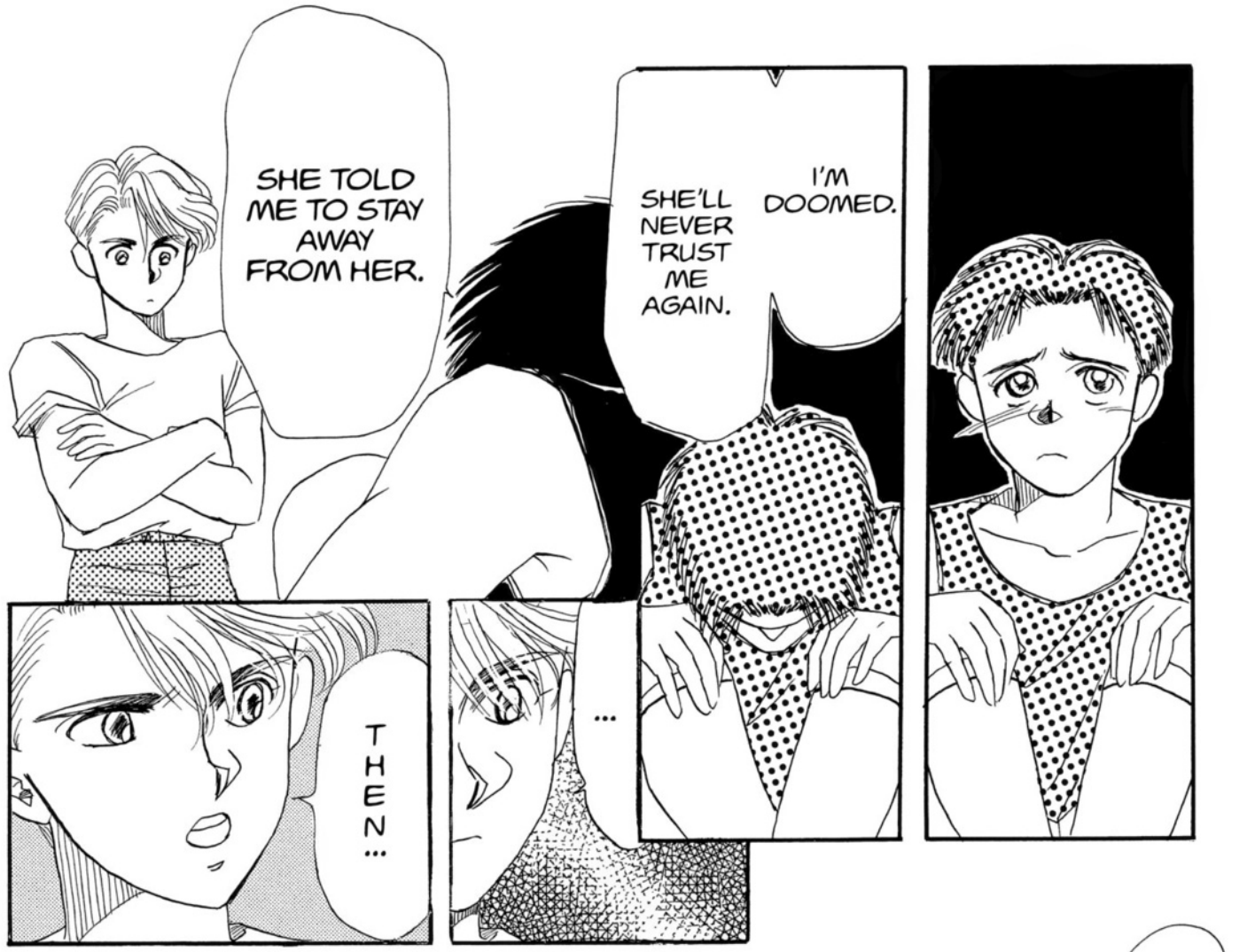
THAT'S ...
...MY LINE!

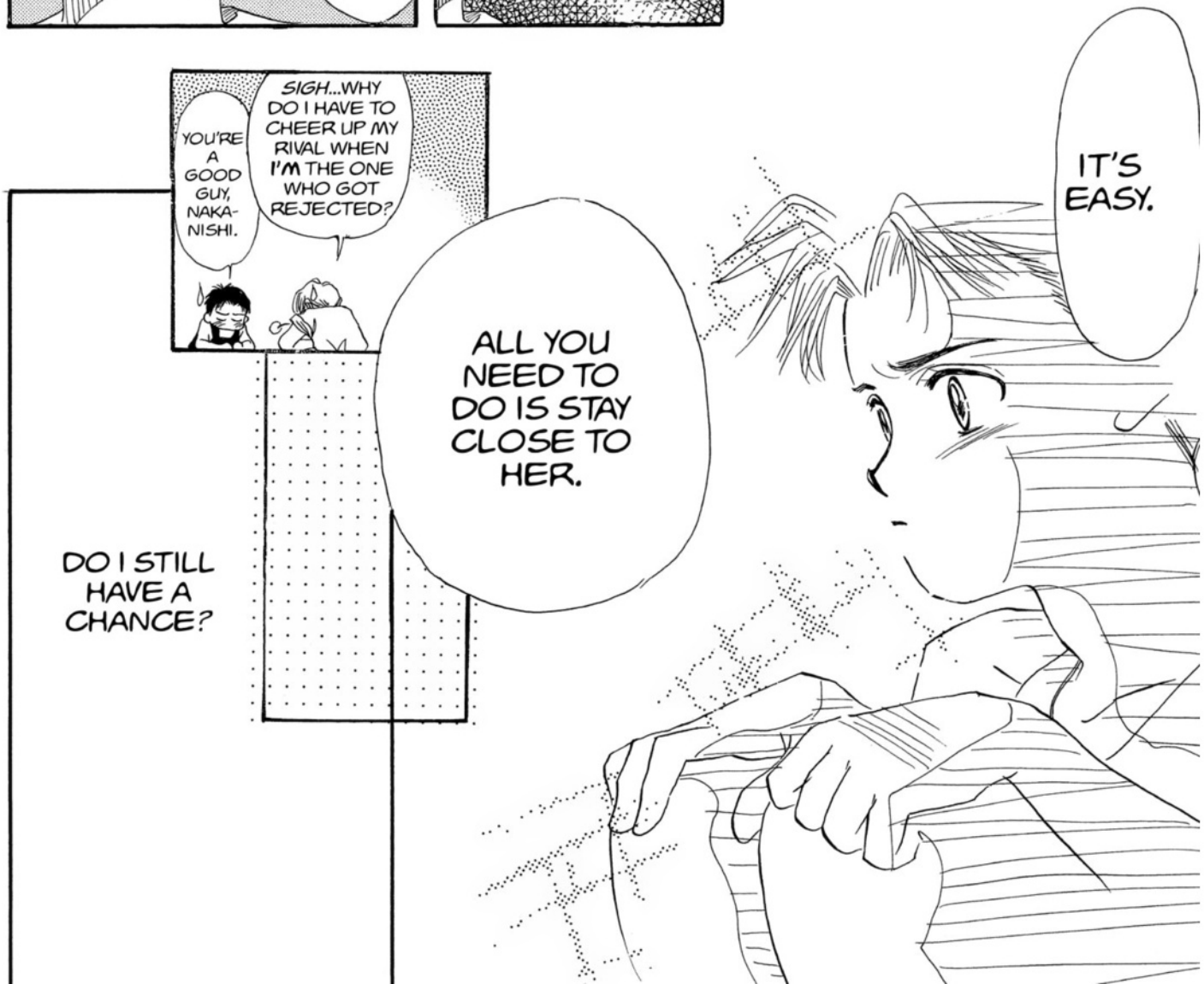

WHUMP
HEH
OH YEAH?
HEH
?

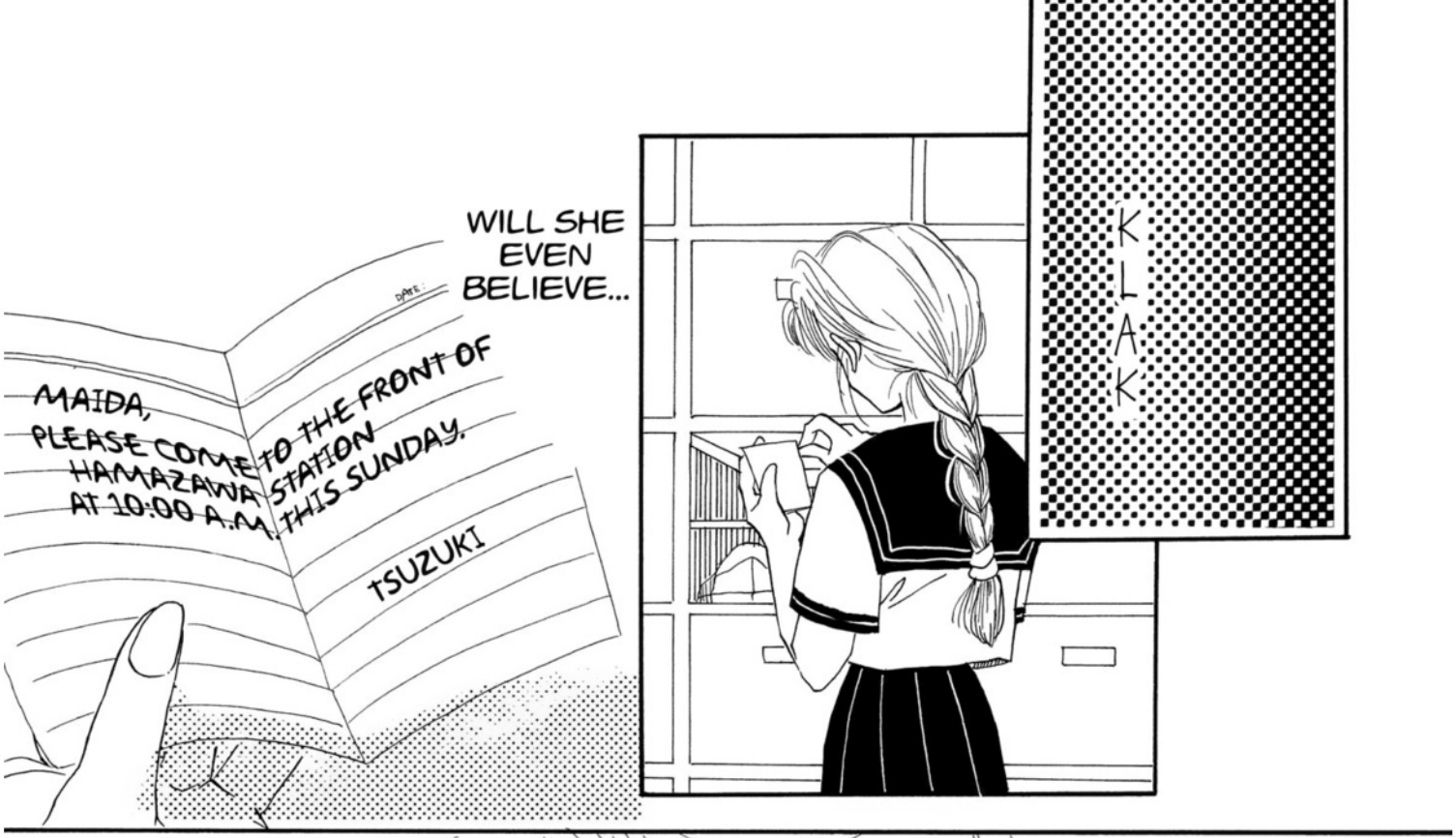
SWAK
OW!!


WAH
...SHE WAS GOING THERE TO MEET YOU!!
SHE THOUGHT ...
WAH
THUMP
THUMP
I DIDN'T?
I don't remember.
YOU DIDN'T TELL MAIDA SHE WAS GOING TO THE MUSIC ROOM TO MEET ME, DID YOU?
HUH? WHAT?


M-MINE.
WHOSE FAULT IS THAT? YOURS OR MINE?
SO...
GOOD!
AT LEAST YOU ADMIT IT.


SHE TOLD ME TO STAY AWAY FROM HER.
I'M DOOMED.
SHE'LL NEVER TRUST ME AGAIN.
THEN...
...


YOU'RE A GOOD GUY, NAKA-NISHI.
SIGH...WHY DO I HAVE TO CHEER UP MY RIVAL WHEN I'M THE ONE WHO GOT REJECTED?
IT'S EASY.
ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS STAY CLOSE TO HER.
DO I STILL HAVE A CHANCE?


WILL SHE EVEN BELIEVE...
DATE
MAIDA, PLEASE COME TO THE FRONT OF HAMAZAWA STATION AT 10:00 A.M. THIS SUNDAY.
TSUZUKI
KLAK

...A MESSAGE FROM ME?

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A GIRL.

KSHHH
!
PLIP
PLIP
OH NO! IT'S RAINING!
HUH? BUT THE SUN'S SHINING!
WHAT'S THIS CALLED AGAIN?
A SUN-SHOWER.
THAT'S IT!
BDMP
BDMP
BDMP
WHAT'LL I DO IF...
...SHE'S NOT THERE?
BDMP
BDMP
WHAT THEN?
BDMP

MAAA

KLAKKA

KLAKKA

HAMA ZAWA

SOBA MAN

HAMAZAWABUS

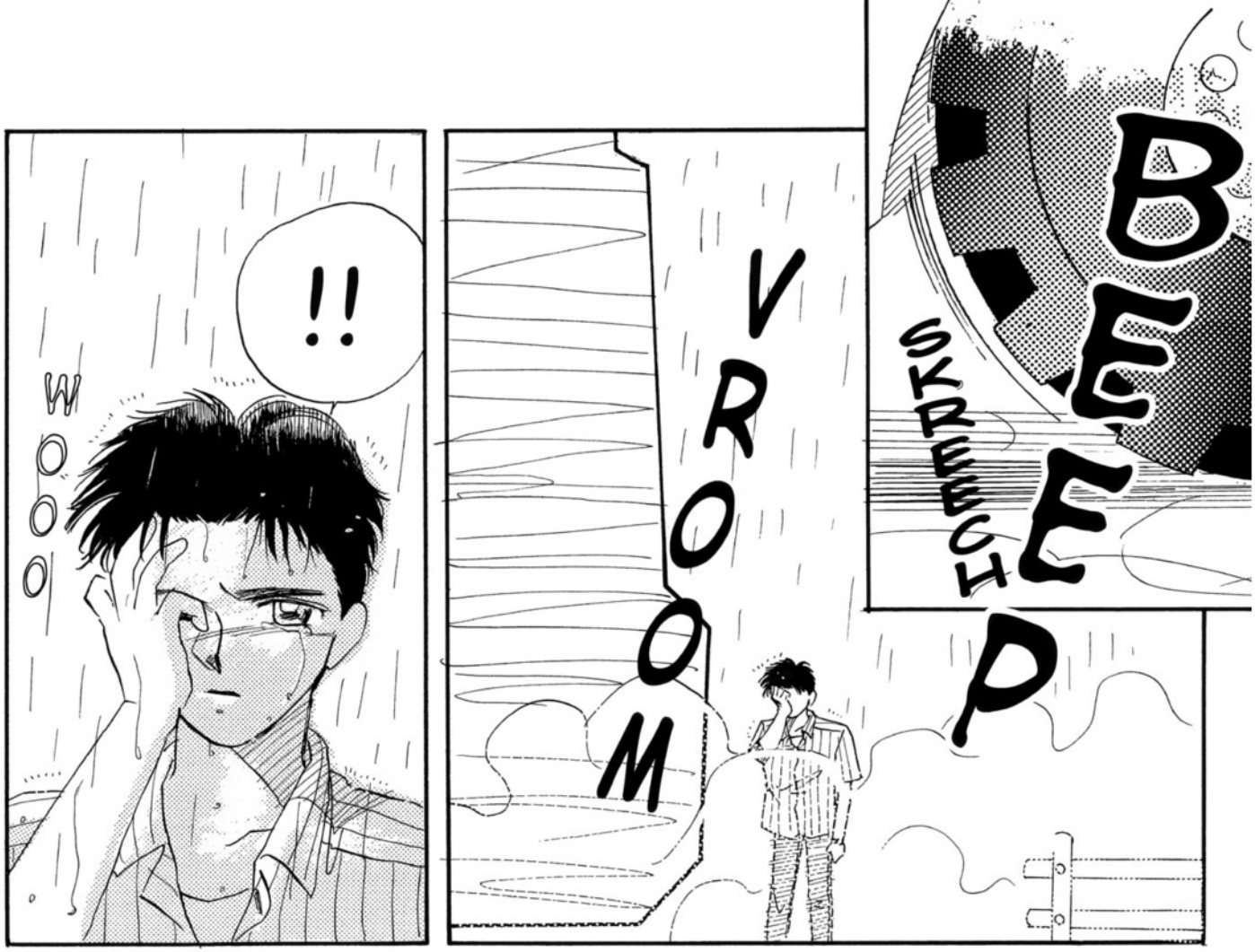
SPLISH SPLISH

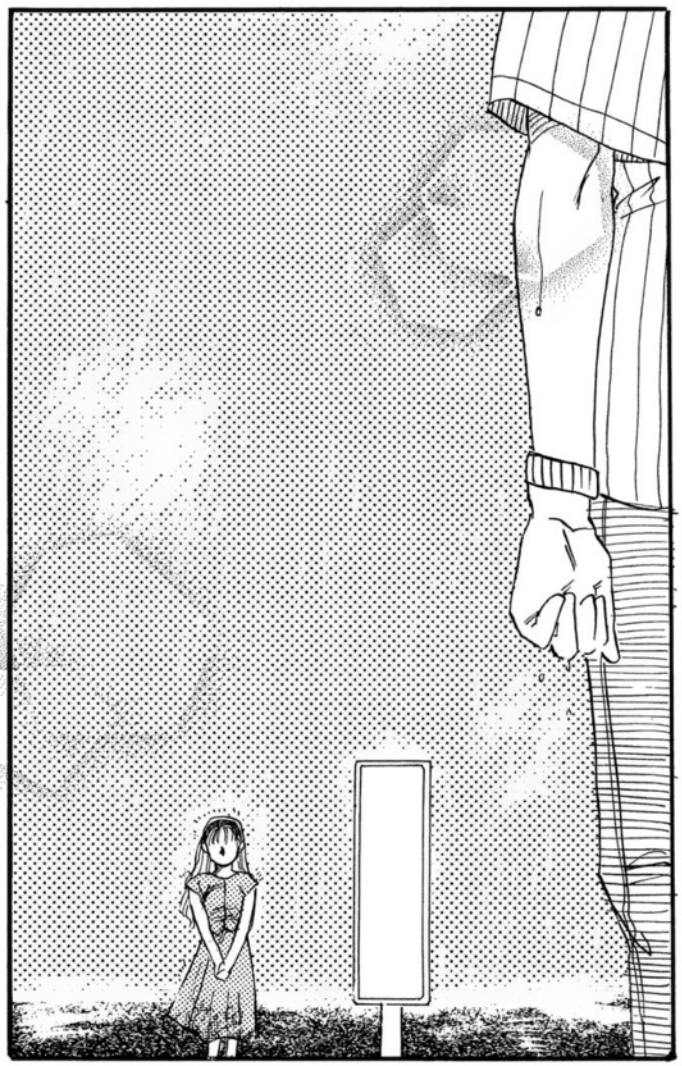
SPLISH

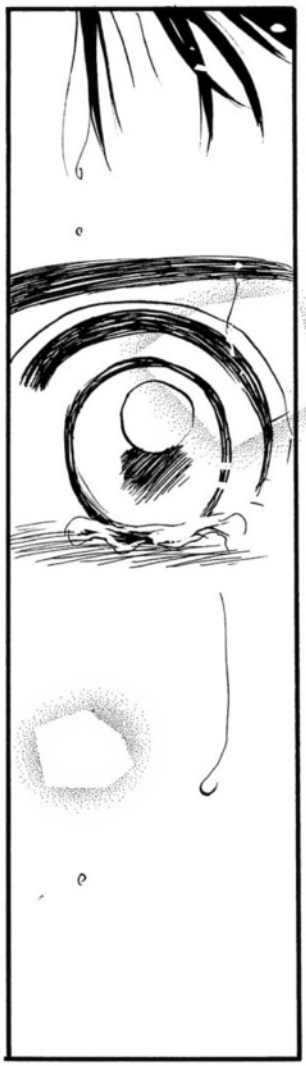
I'M...

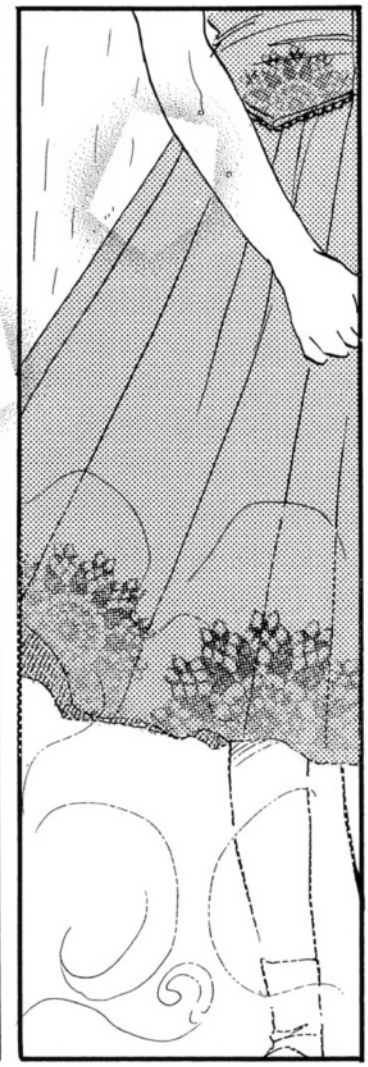
...DOOMED.

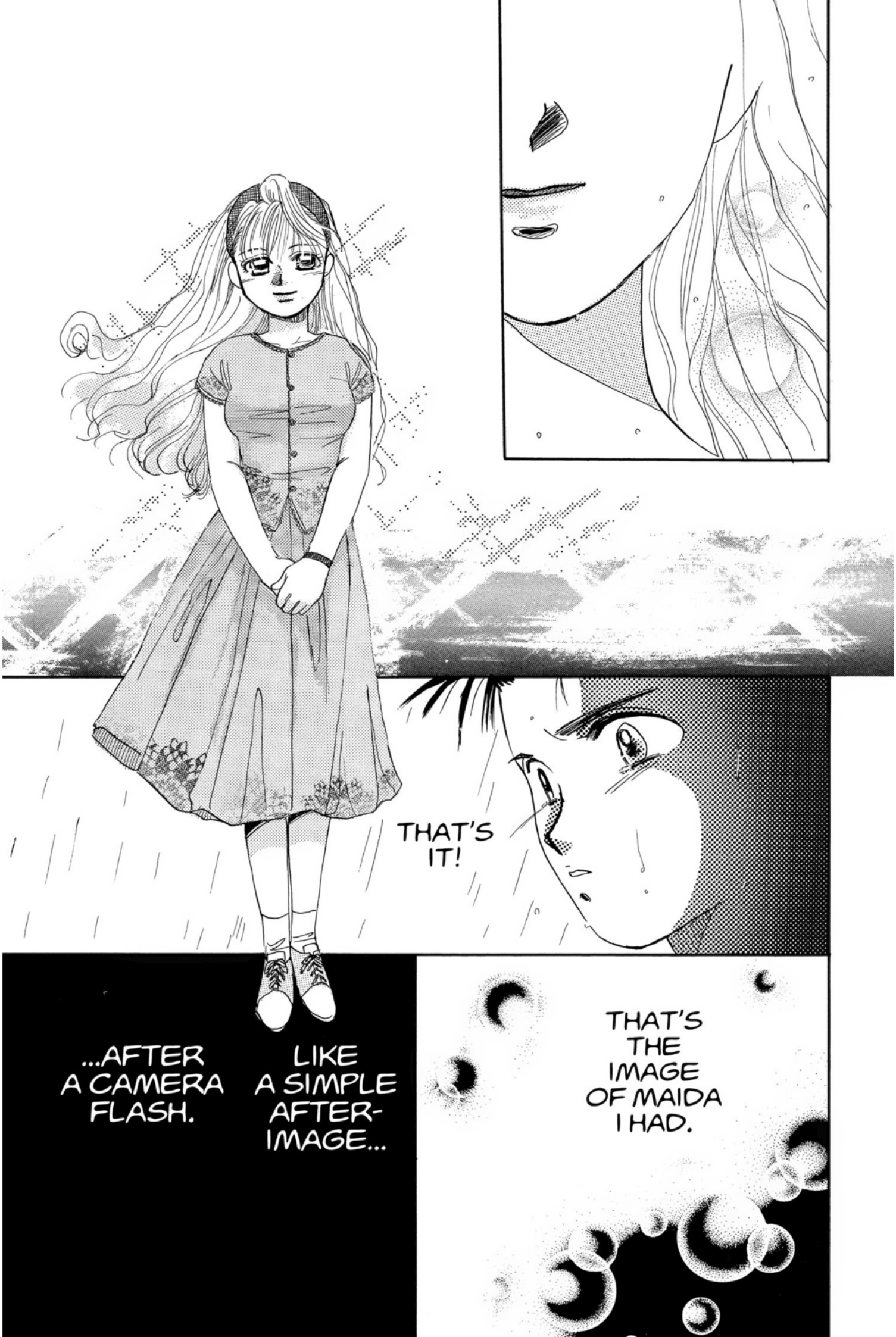
IT'S 10:18.


BEEEP
SKREECH
VROOOM
!!
WOOO



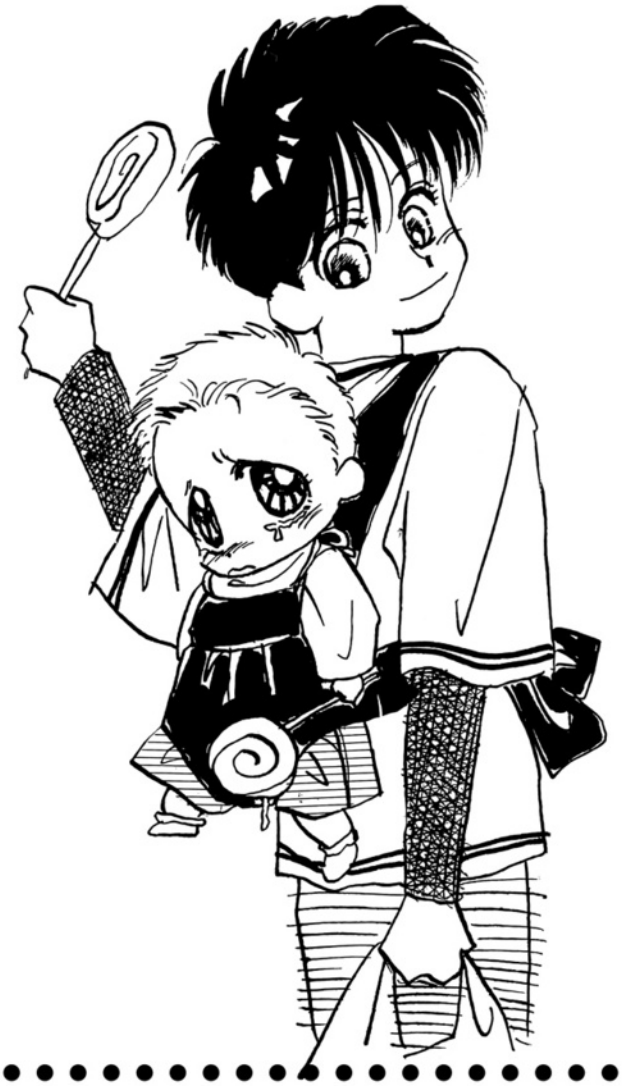





THAT'S IT!
...AFTER A CAMERA FLASH.
LIKE A SIMPLE AFTER-IMAGE...
THAT'S THE IMAGE OF MAIDA I HAD.

MAIDA'S ALWAYS STANDING...
...BATHED IN WAVERING TRANSPAR-ENT LIGHT...
...IN A PATCH OF PURE WHITE.

The End



BABY & ME

Creator: Marimo Ragawa

SBM Title: *Baby & Me*

Date of Birth: September 21

Blood Type: B

Major Works: *Time Limit*, *Baby & Me*, *N.Y. N.Y.*, and *Shanimuni-Go* (Desperately—Go)

Marimo Ragawa first started submitting manga to a comic magazine when she was 12 years old. She kept up her submissions for four years, but to no avail. She decided to submit her work to the magazine *Hana to Yume*, where she received Top Prize in the Monthly Manga Contest as well as an honorable mention (Kasaku) in the magazine's Big Challenge contest. Her first manga was titled *Time Limit*. *Baby & Me* was honored with a Shogakukan Manga Award in 1995 and was spun off into an anime.

Ragawa's work showcases some very cute and expressive line work along with an incredible ability to depict complex emotions and relationships. Some of her other works include *N.Y. N.Y.* and the tennis manga *Shanimuni-Go*.

Ragawa has two brothers and two sisters.

BABY & ME, Vol. 15
The Shojo Beat Manga Edition

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MARIMO RAGAWA

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Translation/JN Productions
Touch-up Art & Lettering/HudsonYards
Design/Yuki Ameda
Editor/Shaenon K. Garrity

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Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
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VP, Sales & Product Marketing/Gonzalo Ferreyra
VP, Creative/Linda Espinosa
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

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Printed in Canada

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

Shojo Beat Manga Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, August 2009